

Proponent Testimony HB2573 Civics Test Hearing
February 11, 2020

Half of eligible young voters, ages 18-29 did not vote in the Presidential Election of 2016. Only 55% of all age eligible voters voted in the 2016 General Election.

How do we increase citizen participation in our democracy? Thomas Jefferson believed the people needed education in order to keep our fragile democracy safe. We need to understand our history, the structure our country is built on, and what part we each play in keeping democracy strong. As a high school student, I attended Boys State and that engagement and education changed my life. I learned what was possible, and what part I could play in it.

A Civics test is a small part of a student's education, but it is a door that can open a young person to start paying attention to the larger world.

I attended a national conference on education this past summer and there is a movement in many states to focus on a Civics Test that is necessary for graduation. This requirement makes clear to students and the public that knowing how our system of democracy works, and what our history is, what our constitution does – these are so important that every student should be able to pass a test, like those applying to become citizens, our students should know as much and be as motivated to be part of the country.

I want to work with the Kansas State Board of Education. I respect that curriculum and standards decisions come from the State Board of Education. However, in this area, the legislature is given the task of ensuring that students are educated in Civic Government. (more about this....)

Therefore, I urge the Committee to vote yes to pass HB2573 favorably and do our part in encouraging and motivating Civic Involvement.

Representative Steve Huebert