

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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## **PENNSYLVANIA COALITION FOR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY PRESENTS RESULTS OF CIVIC LEARNING SURVEY**

*Results Identify Greater Need for Undergraduate Courses in Government for Education  
Majors, Newer Textbooks in School Classrooms*

Philadelphia, PA (September 15, 2006) – As students and educators return to their classrooms and prepare to celebrate Constitution Day, the Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy (PennCORD), led by First Lady Judge Marjorie O. Rendell, is helping schools implement one of their primary missions – teaching students how to become active citizens. The announcement of the results of a statewide survey on civic education was made by First Lady Judge Marjorie O. Rendell at Constitution High School today, and will kick off the National Constitution Center’s Constitution Day activities, which mark the historic signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787.

In this survey, PennCORD utilized responses from over 3,500 educators and school leaders from almost every region in the Commonwealth to determine what is most effective for teaching civic education in the classroom. The public report, “Civic Learning in Pennsylvania Schools: A Survey of Teachers and Administrators,” addresses four key questions:

- To what extent do teachers in Pennsylvania have sufficient time during the school day to teach social studies, civics, and government?
- How prepared do teachers feel teaching social studies, civics, and government?
- What is the quality of resources that teachers have available to teach social studies, civics, and government?
- What are principals’ perceptions of teachers’ time, preparation, and resources to teach these topics?

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## ADD ONE/PENNCORD SURVEY

The results show that Pennsylvania teachers feel that they are provided with enough time during the school day to teach social studies, spending an average of 32-50 minutes per day with 18.5% of instruction focusing on the teaching of civics and government, as set by district and state standards.

The survey also found that both elementary and secondary school teachers are well prepared for the classroom, with 98.5% reporting that they are fully certified to teach the grade levels to which they are assigned. However, 72% of elementary teachers and 65% of secondary educators do not have any undergraduate credits in citizenship education. In addition, elementary school teachers report that only 50% have taken undergraduate courses in American government.

Based on these results, PennCORD is calling upon the state's institutions of higher learning to offer additional requirements in American history. PennCORD will also be providing teacher workshops across the state in the coming school year.

According to Pennsylvania educators, the textbooks currently used in civics and government courses are another cause for concern. Over 40% of the civic and government textbooks used in classrooms are written before the year 2000. In addition, the survey shows that school leaders feel that their schools are doing an adequate job in teaching civic education. The data, however, demonstrates some disparity between the perception of teachers and school leaders.

PennCORD is committed to working with all educators in the coming school year to assist them in reshaping a civic mission in their schools. To further support schools, PennCORD will launch an online community at [www.pennCORD.org](http://www.pennCORD.org) this fall to connect students, educators, and partner organizations.

As a sign of their commitment to civic education, PennCORD will present each of Philadelphia's new pilot schools with their signature banner for permanent display. Constitution High School was the first to receive the banner, as First Lady Judge Marjorie O. Rendell presented it to them today.

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## ADD TWO/PENNCORD SURVEY

PennCORD is a coalition of state and national organizations committed to implementing civic education in classrooms and after school programs in every Pennsylvania community. Lead partners in the coalition include the Office of the Governor of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of First Lady Judge Marjorie O. Rendell, the National Constitution Center, the Pennsylvania Bar Association, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. PennCORD activities are managed by the National Constitution Center.

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*Editor's Note: A complete executive summary of the PennCORD survey results is available at [www.penncord.org](http://www.penncord.org).*