

# CIVICS *Fundamentals*

## with Judge Douglas Ginsburg

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### Quotes on Civics Education

“We cannot sustain a democratic republic with a citizenry that is completely uninformed about, and basically estranged from, our Constitution and our institutions.”

– Douglas H. Ginsburg, Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit



“Only a quarter of Americans can name all three branches of government, the poorest showing on that question in a half-dozen years.”

– 2016 Survey from Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania.



“What these young people seem to recognize is that American democracy is in peril. Its survival and their ability to reap the benefit of living in a country with robust freedoms and rights, a strong economy, and a moral center protected by the rule of law is something that citizens must cherish, protect, and constantly work for. We would do well to pay attention to their plea.”

– Judge William E. Smith, deciding on the case of the Rhode Island students suing the state over a lack of civics education



“It’s not an exaggeration to say that civics education is in a crisis.”

--Amanda Litvinov, *NEA Today*



“A lot of research shows that schools that serve youth of color or poor youth provide the least innovative and most ineffective forms of civic education.”

– Stephanie Serriere, professor of social studies education in the Indiana University system



Only one in five social studies teachers in U.S. public schools report feeling very well prepared to support students’ civic learning, saying they need additional aid with instructional materials, professional development, and training, according to a RAND Corporation [survey](#).



“Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.”

– Thomas Jefferson



The more teens are exposed to high-quality civics education in high school...the more likely they are to be engaged in community service and voting as young adults.

– National Association of State Boards of Education, as reported in *Education Week*



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ask@izzit.org



(888) 242-0563

“Lack of basic civics knowledge is worrisome and an argument for an increased focus on civics education in the schools.”

– Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center



“‘In no country,’ wrote Noah Webster, ‘is education so general – in no country, have the body of the people such knowledge of the rights of men and the principles of government. This knowledge, joined with a keen sense of liberty and a watchful jealousy, will guard our constitutions.’ Today, America’s children are barely acquainted with their country, or the principles on which it was founded.”

--Ben Boychuk, “Without Understanding Civics, Freedom Dies,” *Investor’s Business Daily*



“The philosophy of the schoolhouse in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next.”

– Abraham Lincoln



“The most important thing an institution does is not to prepare a student for a career but for a life as a citizen.”

– Frank Newman, American education reformer



“Moral maturity and freedom require more than mere adherence to the law; they require an understanding of the why and wherefore of its rules and regulations – the principles that make it worthy of their allegiance.”

— Karen Bohlin, author

