

Your Constitution: The Power of Democracy Steering Committee

Steering Committee Charge

The purpose of Your Constitution: The Power of Democracy Steering Committee is to continue implementation of the Commission for Impartial Courts final report recommendations 37(a) and (b) and 43(a) – (c) and (g) and to oversee all follow-up to the Civic Learning California Summit: Making Democracy Work. The committee will guide and support related initiatives spearheaded by the Chief Justice, including the Civic Learning Awards for California Public High Schools and The K–12 Civic Learning Task Force. The committee will also develop and implement short- and long-term strategic plans that build on the momentum and partnerships created by the summit, including, but not limited to a communications plan and a clarification of partner roles and responsibilities. This new steering committee will reduce to one the Leadership Group on Civic Education and Public Outreach (an implementation committee for the Commission for Impartial Courts) and the Civic Learning Summit Steering Committee into one committee.

Creation, Oversight, Staffing

The Chief Justice has created this steering committee to implement policies on civics education adopted by the Judicial Council.

- The steering committee reports to the Chief Justice.
- The Chief Justice appoints members of the steering committee for two-year terms.
- The Administrative Office of the Courts, Judicial and Court Operations Services Division staffs the steering committee.

Steering Committee Membership

The Chief Justice appoints a chair of the steering committee and members of the steering committee as follows:

- Judicial officer of the superior court involved in civics education and public information
- Justice of the Court of Appeals involved in civics education and public information
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction representative
- County Superintendent of Schools representative of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)
- Law school representative
- Federal court representative
- State Bar of California representative
- California Bar Foundation representative
- Civic education leader

Steering Committee Membership

Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakauye

Chief Justice of California and
Chair of the Judicial Council
Supreme Court of California

Appellate Court

Hon. Judith D. McConnell

Administrative Presiding Justice
Court of Appeal
Fourth Appellate District

Superior Court

Hon. Curtis E. A. Karnow

Superior Court of California,
County of San Francisco

Federal Courts

Hon. Frank C. Damrell, Jr. (Ret.)

Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, LLP

State Bar

Hon. Joseph Dunn

President and Chief Executive Officer, State Bar of California

State Superintendent of Education

Mr. Craig Cheslog

Principal Advisor to the Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education

California Bar Foundation

Ms. Sonia Gonzales

Executive Director
California Bar Foundation

California County Superintendent Services Educational Services Association

Mr. David W. Gordon

Superintendent of Schools
Sacramento County Office of Education

Civic Education Leader

Dr. Michelle M. Herczog

Consultant, History-Social Science

Los Angeles County Office of Education

Law School

Hon. Deanell Reece Tacha

Duane and Kelly Roberts

Dean and Professor of Law

Pepperdine University School of Law

Commission for Impartial Courts Final Report Recommendations

Recommendation 37

To improve transparency and better inform the public of the role and operations of the state court system and to enhance public outreach, the judicial branch should identify and disseminate essential information that would increase both the public's access to justice and its opportunities for input. To that end, the following are recommended:

- (a) A leadership advisory group should be appointed to oversee, identify, and coordinate public outreach programs and opportunities for public input; to establish benchmarks of good practice; and to promote the assembly of local teams to assist courts with local outreach programs; [and]
- (b) The AOC [Administrative Office of the Courts] should collect, summarize, and evaluate public outreach resources and methods for public input that are currently available for judges and court administrators and should also collect, summarize, and evaluate educational materials for K–12 teachers and for judges and court administrators making classroom visits.

Recommendation 43

Every child in the state should receive a quality civics education, and judges, courts, teachers, and school administrators should be supported in their efforts to educate students about the judiciary and its function in a democratic society. To that end, the following are specifically recommended:

- (a) Strategies for meaningful changes to civics education in California should be supported, and a strategic plan for judicial branch support for civics education should be developed;
- (b) Political support should be sought from leaders in the Legislature, the State Bar, the law enforcement community, and other interested entities to

improve civics education;

- (c) Teacher training programs, curriculum development, and education programs on civics should all be expanded to include the courts; [and]
- (g) Recognition programs that bring attention to teachers, judges, and court administrators who advance civics education should be promoted.

References

Judicial Council of Cal. meeting, August 27, 2010. Minutes, Item 6, pp. 10–11, www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/meetings.htm.

Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Commission for Impartial Courts: Final Report* (December 15, 2009), www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/tflists/commimpart.htm