

**First Regular Session
Sixty-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R03-0899.01 Jeff Conway

SJR03-040

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Windels, and Andrews

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

(None),

Senate Committees

House Committees

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 03-040

101 **CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A LEGISLATIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE**
102 **TO STUDY CIVIC EDUCATION.**

1 WHEREAS, Our nation's system of government is built on the
2 active participation of its citizens; and

3 WHEREAS, Preparation of young people to become active
4 participants in society and government is necessary to ensure a strong and
5 vital democracy; and

6 WHEREAS, Too often, young people are not civically engaged
7 and are undereducated about critically important processes of
8 government; and

9 WHEREAS, A 1999 nationwide study of American youth aged
10 fifteen to twenty-four years by the National Association of Secretaries of
11 State concluded that "young Americans have only a limited, vague
12 understanding of what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society";
13 and

14 WHEREAS, The Center for Civic Education found that "youth

*Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

1 identify with the specific rights associated with citizenship, but have only
2 vague ideas about public responsibilities"; and

3 WHEREAS, Lack of understanding of government and its
4 processes can lead to disillusionment with and distrust of public
5 institutions and leaders and correspondingly low levels of political and
6 civic participation; and

7 WHEREAS, The 1998 National Assessment of Educational
8 Progress in Civics found more than thirty percent of all students tested at
9 grades four, eight, and twelve scored below a "basic" understanding of
10 civics and government and only twenty-two percent scored as
11 "proficient"; and

12 WHEREAS, It is necessary that the state of Colorado address the
13 growing problem of civic disengagement; and

14 WHEREAS, The state of Colorado and its citizens benefit from
15 greater community and youth involvement in state and local institutions;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The problem of civic disengagement requires that
18 many institutions share the responsibility for educating students; and

19 WHEREAS, Students learn citizenship in multifaceted ways: In
20 familial relationships, in schools, in the workplace, through community
21 involvement in organizations, and by interacting with people working in
22 politics and in government; and

23 WHEREAS, It is therefore appropriate for the General Assembly
24 to form an interim committee to study the growing problem of civic
25 disengagement, the membership of which committee includes both
26 elected officials and members of the community; now, therefore,

27 *Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly*
28 *of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:*

29 (1) That there is hereby created a legislative committee,
30 hereinafter referred to as the "committee", which shall meet in the interim
31 after the 2003 Regular Session of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly to
32 study multifaceted ways by which educators and community leaders can
33 increase civic engagement and promote civic responsibility among young
34 people.

35 (2) (a) That the committee shall consist of twelve members
36 appointed as follows:

37 (I) Four members of the Senate, two appointed by the President
38 of the Senate and two appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;

39 (II) Four members of the House of Representatives, appointed by
40 the Speaker of the House of Representatives after consultation with the
41 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives; and

- 1 (III) Four members of the public appointed by the Governor.
- 2 (b) No more than two members from the Senate shall be from the
3 same political party. No more than two members from the House of
4 Representatives shall be from the same political party. No more than two
5 members of the public appointed by the Governor shall be from the same
6 political party.
- 7 (c) All appointments to the committee shall be made on or before
8 July 1, 2003.
- 9 (3) That the committee shall consider the following issues:
- 10 (a) The reasons for civic disengagement; and
- 11 (b) Existing and needed components of civic instruction in our
12 schools; and
- 13 (c) Methods to increase youth participation in governmental
14 processes and civic engagement; and
- 15 (d) Any other matters the committee deems fall within the scope
16 of the study of the committee.
- 17 (4) (a) That there is hereby created a task force to assist and
18 support the work of the committee. The task force shall consist of up to
19 twenty-four members appointed by the chair and vice-chair of the
20 committee, which members shall serve without compensation or
21 reimbursement for travel or other expenses. No more than half of the task
22 force members shall be from the same political party. The task force
23 shall select its own chair and vice-chair and shall meet at the call of the
24 task force chair. The chair and the vice-chair of the task force shall not
25 be members of the same political party.
- 26 (b) In making appointments to the task force, the appointing
27 authorities shall ensure that the membership of the task force reflects:
- 28 (I) The ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of the state; and
- 29 (II) A wide range of expertise, including but not limited to: A
30 teacher; a school administrator; a member of a school district board of
31 education; a student; a member of a parent association; a representative
32 of higher education; a member of a civic organization; a member of the
33 business community; and members of the community-at-large.
- 34 (c) The task force shall make findings and recommendations to
35 the committee and shall prepare a written report.
- 36 (d) The task force is authorized to receive contributions, grants,
37 services, and in-kind donations from any public or private entity to be
38 expended for any direct or indirect costs associated with the duties of the
39 task force set forth in this resolution.
- 40 (e) The director of research of the legislative council, the director

1 of the office of legislative legal services, and the commissioner of
2 education shall supply staff assistance to the task force as they deem
3 appropriate. The task force may also accept staff support from the private
4 sector.

5 (5) (a) That the committee shall meet no more than three times
6 beginning in July, 2003, during the 2003 interim. Each meeting of the
7 committee shall include an opportunity for public comment on items
8 related to the committee's agenda.

9 (b) That the members of the committee, including the legislative
10 members, shall serve without compensation.

11 (c) That the Legislative Council Staff and the Office of Legislative
12 Legal Services shall be available to assist the committee in carrying out
13 its duties.

14 (6) That the committee shall make a report to the Legislative
15 Council by the date specified in Joint Rule 24 (b)(1)(D). Such report may
16 include recommendations for legislation, including but not limited to
17 legislation continuing the committee, and an outline of further time and
18 process which may be necessary to achieve the committee's study goals.
19 Legislation recommended by the committee shall be treated as legislation
20 recommended by any other interim committee for the purposes of any
21 introduction deadlines or bill limitations imposed by the Joint Rules of
22 the Senate and House of Representatives.