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... from the General Assembly

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Conroy Introduces Legislation Recommending Civics Education Requirements

VILLA PARK, Ill. – State Rep. Deb Conroy (D-Villa Park) introduced legislation that recommends a civics education requirement for Illinois high schools.

Rep. Conroy previously sponsored and passed legislation creating a task force comprised of legislators, educators, school administrators, and community leaders from across the state to study the status of civics education curriculum in the state.

“Illinois is one of only ten states in the country that does not have a state requirement for a civics course for graduation,” Conroy said. “Many students graduate without even basic knowledge of current events and how to become active members of their communities.”

Last year, the task force released the results of their study to the public. The task force made various recommendations to the legislature including requiring a high school course covering civics and government.

“A required high school civics course will provide all Illinois students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for informed, effective, and lifelong participation in our democracy” said Shawn Healy, Task Force Chair and Civic Learning Scholar at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation in Chicago.

House Bill 4025 recommends a civics education requirement for Illinois public high schools and House Bill 4024 requires the State Board of Education to ensure that teachers have access to professional development activities in civics education. Rep. Conroy will work with the McCormick Foundation and other stakeholders to identify potential public-private partners to fund the cost of a mandated civics course and teacher training.

In addition to the civics education legislation, Rep. Conroy is the chief sponsor of House Bill 3368 that allows individuals aged 16 and 17 to register to vote proactively and be deemed officially registered voters when they turn 18.

“We need to be giving our youth across the state the tools they need to become active members of their community and the future leaders our state needs,” Conroy said. “By introducing a civics education requirement and expanding the opportunities for young people to get registered to vote we are taking steps to help young people across the state get involved and active in their communities.”

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