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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY CREATES TASK FORCE ON CIVIC EDUCATION**

*Will explore state of civic learning in Illinois and offer recommended reforms*

**SPRINGFIELD, MAY 17, 2013**— The Illinois Senate voted, 49-2, to create a state task force on civic education. The legislation, [HB-2428](#), passed the House on April 10, 2013, by a vote of 67-44. Assuming Governor Pat Quinn signs HB-2428 into law, the task force will analyze the current state of civic education in Illinois, identify best practices throughout the country, and make recommendations to the General Assembly to increase civic literacy and capacity of youth to be informed participants in our democracy.

Illinois has [some of the weakest civic education requirements](#) in the country. It is one of 10 states that does not require a standalone civics or government course and its standardized tests ignore social studies altogether. If it isn't mandated or tested, increasingly it isn't taught, to the detriment of a number of subjects, civics included, critical for college, career, and civic readiness.

“High-quality, school-based civic learning opportunities build the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for informed, effective engagement in our democracy,” said Shawn Healy, Chair, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC). “Illinois has several outstanding examples of schools that are deeply committed to their civic mission, and the task force will shine a spotlight on the best practices they employ. It will also consider how state and local policies can support scalable, sustainable, and universal civic education.”

The task force legislation was sponsored in the Illinois House by Rep. Deborah Conroy (D-Villa Park) and in the Senate by Thomas Cullerton (D-Villa Park). It is supported by the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC), which is convened by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, and advocates for stronger school-based civic education statewide. ICMC members, including the Citizen Advocacy Center in Elmhurst and former Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan, played prominent roles in advocating for the task force's creation.

To learn more about the McCormick Foundation's civic learning and engagement initiatives, please click [here](#).

**About the Robert R. McCormick Foundation**

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is committed to fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic programs, Cantigny Park and museums, the Foundation helps develop citizen leaders and works to make life better in our communities. The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is one of the nation's largest foundations, with more than \$1 billion in assets. For more information, please visit [www.McCormickFoundation.org](http://www.McCormickFoundation.org).

**About The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition**

The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC) is a broad, non-partisan consortium including educators, administrators, students, universities, funders, elected officials, policymakers and representatives from the private and non-profit sectors. Formed in 2004, the Illinois Coalition is part of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a national initiative to restore a core purpose of education to prepare America's youngest citizens to be informed and active participants in our democracy. The ICMC works to implement the recommendations of the Illinois Civic Blueprint through both policy and practice, including the Democracy Schools Initiative. For more information, please visit [www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools](http://www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools).

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