

# JOURNAL OF CIVIC LITERACY



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the second issue of *The Journal of Civic Literacy*.

We are delighted to introduce this issue with an essay by widely respected former Congressman Lee Hamilton, a longtime and ardent proponent of civic literacy and civic engagement, whose Center on Congress has added greatly to the discourse over what skills and information are critical to the maintenance of our democratic system.

The two research articles in this issue address very different subjects, both of which are central to an understanding of the barriers Americans face as we attempt to fashion policies that are consistent with our foundational values. In *Reflections on Scientific Literacy, Worldviews, and Education*, David L. Stocum considers the nature and extent of scientific knowledge required by policymakers and voters in a country and world that is rapidly being remade by science and technology. Stocum raises important questions about the relationship of science and the humanities, the nature of credible evidence, and the effect of scientific illiteracy in a democratic society.

In *Civic Education, Public Education and the African-American Community in Indianapolis: Mending the Fracture*, Johari R. Shuck and Rob Helfenbein report on the conclusions of a methodologically innovative research project focused upon civic identity in Indianapolis' African-American community, and consider the implications for the transmission of civic knowledge and encouragement of civic engagement in marginalized communities. Their findings suggest that formal civics education, even when done well, may not be sufficient to encourage lifelong civic participation.

In partial contrast to the Shuck and Helfenbein thesis, Melinda Cooperman reports on a successful approach being taken by the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project. In *Seeds of Change: Using the Tools of Today to Empower the Leaders of Tomorrow*, Cooperman reports on a project to teach high school students to care about civic issues, especially those connected to the U.S. Constitution. The Project was started in 1999 by Professor Jamin B. Raskin to address the well-documented constitutional illiteracy and civic disengagement of many young people, especially those from marginalized communities.

Taken together, the articles in this issue serve to illuminate the complexities of civic literacy and the barriers to greater civic participation, but as we think you will agree, the authors also suggest some paths forward.

As always, we welcome your comments on these articles, as well as your submission of your own research. Send these to my attention at [civlit@iupui.edu](mailto:civlit@iupui.edu).