

## Attend a school board, or legislative hearing to speak to the importance of Action Civics



- **Identify** a community or political board (e.g. community board, school committee, city council) and see when its meetings are held
- **Research** the agenda for an upcoming meeting
- **Draft** a testimony to give at the meeting that includes: a little about yourself, your position on the issue and points to back it up, an overview of possible opposing arguments, and a conclusion that incorporates the specific action you want to see
- **Attend** the meeting, give your testimony, and listen to the positions of other attendees

### Why you should speak about Action Civics at a school board or legislative hearing

Speaking at a public assembly for Action Civics - say, a School Board meeting or legislative hearing - is a hallmark technique of effective advocacy. Generally, public assemblies of this sort allot no more than two minutes of speaking time and also permit the submittal of written testimony into a publicly available record. Providing such testimony can demonstrate noteworthy commitment to a policy objective. In this case, it illustrates that a local constituency exists which demands student-led, project based civics education for young people in your area.

What follows below is draft testimony for Action Civics that can be edited and shared at a local meeting. Ensure that what is below is adjusted to reflect the situation and needs in your local community.

Please share your testimony on social media using the hashtag #beyondtheballot and email it to us at: [beyondtheballot@generationcitizen.org](mailto:beyondtheballot@generationcitizen.org)

### Testimony Template

Good [*morning/ afternoon*] members of [*the group that you are speaking to*], my name is [*your name*] and I live in [*your community*]. I am a [*profession (e.g. teacher, lawyer, community advocate) or relation to education (e.g. student, parent, alumni)*] and I am deeply concerned about the state of civics education in [*your community*]. Educating for citizenship is a foundational responsibility of American public schools. Yet there are insufficient requirements and resources for civics education in [*your community*].

I am [*pleased/ displeased*] to see that the [*school board/ legislature*] [*is/ is not*] addressing civics education by [*elaborate on plans of school board/ legislature if they exit*]. Recent data shows that only 23% of eighth graders nationwide are proficient in civics. Worse, young people nationwide are receiving unequal civic learning opportunities: students in low-income schools, when compared with just average socioeconomic status schools, are half as likely to study how

laws are made, and 30% less likely to report having experiences with debates or panel discussions in social studies classes.

It is critical that every student in [*your community*] receive an effective Action Civics education. Action Civics is a student-centered, experiential practice in which young people learn about the political process by taking action on specific issues in their communities. In Action Civics, students typically follow a process of community examination, issue identification, research, strategizing, taking action, and reflection. Unlike rote, traditional civics education courses, Action Civics is comprised of proven practices for civic learning, and fosters the civic knowledge, skills, and motivation in students that is necessary for lifelong civic participation.

This is a vital time for a renewed commitment to, and investment in, civics education in [*your community*] and particularly Action Civics. I hope that you will make this commitment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

### **Sample testimony about Action Civics:**

- [Public testimony on the importance of Action Civics education, from Robert DeLossa, Social Studies department chair at Lowell High School](#)
- [Testimony to the New York City Council Education Committee on behalf of Generation Citizen](#)