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Cheryl K. Walsh, Acting CEO
Citizenship Counts
1661 E. Camelback Road, Suite 150
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Cheryl:

Today, we are faced with many challenges in our country and yet, there is great hope for our future. If we are to reach our greatest potential, however, we must reinvigorate civic education to inspire our young people to understand core ideas from our history and the roles they can play in shaping history as active citizens in their communities. I am pleased to join the National Advisory Board of Citizenship Counts in order to help ensure that our young people carry on our longstanding traditions of service and civic leadership.

While serving as Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and the USA Freedom Corps, I witnessed first-hand the compassion of the American people, as volunteering soared after 9/11 through 2005. Since leaving the White House, we have worked to expand community and national service through a new effort called Service Nation, which includes more opportunities for service-learning and a new Civic Health Index to measure America's civic habits and attitudes over time. This work builds on the 2003 report, The Civic Mission of Schools, in which 50 scholars and education practitioners set forth the case for civic learning in our schools and identified six promising approaches to civic education. Citizenship Counts responds to nearly all of these suggested approaches by combining classroom instruction on government, history, law and democracy with opportunities to participate in the democratic process and in volunteer projects in communities linked to classroom instruction. The fact that a real naturalization ceremony – as opposed to a simulated process – is conducted in the school, makes the program that much more impressive.

It is essential that we make Citizenship Counts available to every student in America during his or her middle school experience. I look forward to working with you to make this dream a reality.

Best regards,



John Bridgeland