

Supreme Court of the United States  
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF  
JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR (RET.)

October 6, 2008

Ms. Alysa Ullman, Executive Director  
Citizenship Counts  
1661 E. Camelback Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016

Dear Ms. Ullman:

Please accept this letter as confirmation of my agreement to be associated with Citizenship Counts as a National Advisory Board Member. I applaud the efforts of Citizenship Counts to educate students about the goals, values, benefits and responsibilities of democracy. I am pleased to lend my support to this cause.

Until the 1960s, most high schools offered three courses in civics and government. Two of these courses, specifically explored the role of citizens and encouraged students to discuss current issues. In contrast, many schools today offer little or no civic learning, and research shows that students are woefully disconnected from current events and issues. With Citizenship Counts and other up and coming civic initiatives on the horizon, however, I believe there is hope that we can reverse this trend.

I am particularly pleased that the goal of Citizenship Counts is to engage *every* middle school student in America in real acts of democracy, including that very special ceremony of naturalization for new citizens. No other ritual of our government can better demonstrate the honor and pride of citizenship than the naturalization ceremony. I hope to preside at the first such naturalization ceremony planned and hosted by students who are studying this curriculum. I look forward to working with you to prepare for this happy occasion in March 2009.

Eighty years ago, John Dewey said, "Democracy needs to be reborn in every generation and education is its midwife." Congratulations on your efforts to spread the seeds of democracy throughout this great land.

Sincerely,

  
Sandra Day O'Connor