



Sent: Sept. 22, 2009

Subject: TDI E-News – Lots of Information

We have lots of information, opportunities and tidbits to share with you . . .

The Department of State (and others) are sponsoring a second year of the popular "Democracy Is..." video competition for international youth over the age of 18. Have your students create a three-minute video that completes the phrase, "Democracy Is..." and they could win international recognition (and visibility on YouTube). You can read the official rules and guidelines [here](#). The deadline is January 30, 2010. Check out the winners of last year's competition [here](#).

About three weeks after the No Better Time conference, leading democracy advocates (including TDI board members Bruce Mallory, Matt Leighninger, Peter Levine, and Pat Scully, and many other TDI members) convened in Washington, D.C. for the second meeting of the Strengthening Our Nation's Democracy (SOND) group (for information about the first gathering, see [Archived E-News](#), November 3, 2008). At this meeting, representatives of the Obama administration's Offices of Public Engagement and of Social Innovation joined the group in considering, how do we engage everyday people in selecting leaders, influencing laws and regulations, and taking public action? You can read the report [here](#), and we'd like to point you to one recommendation in particular, to "build skills and capacity for public engagement."

Page 16 of the SOND report includes a challenge to schools, colleges and universities to create programs that cultivate in citizen and public officials the "skills necessary for deliberative forms of problem-solving in a diverse society; knowledge of politics, civic work, and civil and human rights; and expectations of transparency, participation, and collaboration." We endorse this mandate.

The Summer Institute of Civic Studies at Tufts, July 13-24, TDI board member Peter Levine reports in his [blog](#), is viewable on C-Span! The Institute considered what engaged citizens need to know, believe, and be able to do, the institutional structures that promote citizenship, and the kinds of individual skills, habits, and knowledge that democracy needs. You can watch it [here](#), and go to the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service [web site](#) to read more about this amazing curriculum.

We're excited about a new web-based initiative, a [call for stories about community-university engagement](#), supported by the Kettering Foundation and the brainchild of Scott Peters (Cornell), Ted Alter (Penn State), and Tim Shaffer (Cornell). When you visit the site, tell your community-partnership story and then [tell us](#) so we can send a notice out to our other members.

Do you know about and read [Democracy: A Journal of Ideas](#)? The latest issue contains [Edward Gresser's "GEO-Politics"](#), an article on the upcoming symposium in Copenhagen for environmentalists, [E.J. Dionne, Jr.](#), the chairman of the journal's editorial committee, discusses Alan Wolfe's book *The Future of Liberalism*. Philosophy

professor [Hilary Bok](#) analyzes John Rawls' recently discovered undergraduate thesis. There's a lot more in this issue, so check it out.

Public Agenda's latest [e-news](#) contains lots of good information about their work on education, including a new report on the parent gap in education.

Finally, the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) recently released their annual [civic health index](#). This year's civic health index examines the role the economic recession is having on Americans' civic participation. The study also contains new data on levels of trust and how Americans, particularly millennials are using the internet and new social media to be engaged.