

SOUTH CAROLINA BLUES FEDERAL POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE



June 2019

Civics Education

by James D'Alessio, VP of Government Affairs

I recently had an opportunity to attend the musical *Hamilton*. While focused on the life and achievements of our first Treasury Secretary, it is also an entertaining depiction of the founding of our country and the issues facing the Founding Fathers during and after the war.

I was incredibly impressed with how well the show blended history and civics with high quality entertainment. It struck me that maybe it can help address one of the problems our country faces that gets too little attention -- the dismal state of civics education.

Many experts are using the term “civic illiteracy” to describe the problem. While over 97% of immigrants pass the US citizenship exam, in a survey conducted by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation earlier this year, only 40% of Americans passed, and that number dropped to 27% when looking at Americans under age 45. The Joe Foss Institute reports that only one-third of native-born Americans can name the three branches of government and only 20% are able to name two rights granted by the Declaration of Independence. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that just 24% of American high school seniors score proficient or above in civics.

Some may see this as trivial, and ask why it is important. In a system designed for government “by the people,” it is critical that the people understand our basic freedoms and how our system is designed to protect them. Back to our Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton himself answered, “The subject speaks to its own importance; comprehending in its consequence nothing less than the existence of the union...” None other than George Washington stated, “In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing...than... communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?” How disappointed would Washington be that in a 2012 survey, fewer than 20% of American college graduates could identify him as the American general at Yorktown.

Having just observed Memorial Day and the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, I hope you will consider the importance of civics education to the future of our country. If you are interested in learning more about the national response to this issue, or in trying out the test yourself, you can visit the Joe Foss Institute website at <https://joefossinstitute.org>. In the spirit of fellowship and providing a mechanism for learning more about civics, our PAC is offering a book club that you can learn more about below. Hopefully it is an opportunity for you to have fun, meet fellow PAC members, and maybe learn something along the way!



SC BLUES FEDPAC
POLITICAL BOOK CLUB

NEW – Political Book Club

The PAC is launching a brand new Political Book Club! We will choose one book per month to read and discuss in groups. The PAC will hold meetings at four locations monthly and members can choose which meeting they wish to attend.

Email Victoria at victoria.halydier@bcbsc.com and let her know you wish to join. You will receive separate emails with book titles and meeting times.



2020 Election Center

The next presidential election will be on November 3, 2020. So far 24 Democrats and 2 Republicans have entered the race or formed a presidential exploratory committee. The first two of twelve Democratic primary debates will be held in June and July. NBC News, MSNBC and Telemundo will host the first debate on June 26 & 27 in Miami, FL and CNN will host the second debate on July 30 & 31 in Detroit. Only the top 20 Democratic candidates will debate. Candidates must qualify by having 1% or more support in three polls between January 1, 2019 and 14 days prior to the debate or by demonstrating that the campaign has received donations from at least 65,000 unique donors or a minimum of 200 unique donors per state in at least 20 states. If more than 20 candidates qualify then only the top 20 will participate. *Unqualified candidates are highlighted below in light blue.* The Democratic National Convention will be held July 13 -16, 2020 in Milwaukee, WI. The Republican National Convention is scheduled to take place August 24 - 27, 2020 in Charlotte, NC.

Democrats

- Michael Bennet
- Joe Biden
- Bill de Blasio
- Cory Booker
- Steve Bullock
- Pete Buttigieg
- Julián Castro
- John Delaney
- Tulsi Gabbard
- Kirsten Gillibrand
- Mike Gravel
- Kamala Harris
- John Hickenlooper
- Jay Inslee
- Amy Klobuchar
- Wayne Messam
- Seth Moulton
- Beto O'Rourke
- Tim Ryan
- Bernie Sanders
- Eric Swalwell
- Elizabeth Warren
- Marianne Williamson
- Andrew Yang

Republicans

- Donald Trump
- Bill Weld

