
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

SCR 8414

Brief Description: Creating a joint select committee on civic health.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick, Torres, Billig, Boehnke, Cleveland, Conway, Dhingra, Frame, Holy, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Muzzall, Nguyen, Nobles, Pedersen, Rivers, Saldaña, Shewmake, Stanford, Wagoner, Warnick, Wellman, Wilson, C. and Wilson, J.; by request of Lieutenant Governor.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Concurrent Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the Joint Select Committee on Civic Health to build upon the work of the Project for Civic Health.

Hearing Date: 2/14/24

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

In 2023 the Project for Civic Health (Project) was initiated by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor in partnership with the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, and the William D. Ruckelshaus Center. The partnership was formed on the shared premise of concern for the civic health of democracy. The initial stage of the Project involved convening community leaders, former and current elected officials, and youth in a series of roundtable discussions to discover the nature of the problem and its causes, as well as to solicit ideas to restore higher standards for respectful disagreement. The roundtable discussions were formalized into a report titled *Common Ground for the Common Good*, which includes a menu of potential solutions that were discussed such as: creating training programs for candidates and elected leaders on respectful dialogue; celebrating,

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promoting, and rewarding bipartisan collaboration; bolstering credible local news media; creating more robust civic education for youth and adults; finding ways to preserve the benefits of social media while diminishing its harms; working on unifying civic projects; and building media literacy.

The roundtable report was to serve as a foundation for discussions at the Civic Health Project Summit, held on October 19, 2023. The purpose of the summit was to convene individuals from across the state to discuss the state of civic health in Washington and explore ways for sustained action to improve civic health in the state.

Summary of Bill:

The Joint Select Committee on Civic Health (CCH) is established to build upon the work of the Project for Civic Health. The CCH must issue its preliminary recommendations and report to the Legislature prior to the 2025 regular session. A final report, including final recommendations, is due prior to the 2026 regular session.

The CCH consists of 13 members:

- the Lieutenant Governor;
- three members of the majority party and three members of the minority party of the Senate, selected by the President of the Senate; and
- three members of the majority party and three members of the minority party of the House of Representatives, selected by the Speaker of the House.

The Lieutenant Governor serves as the chair of the CCH with one member of the majority party and one member of the minority party from opposite chambers both serving as vice chairs. Expenses and hiring of additional staff are subject to the approval of the House of Representatives Executive Rules Committee and the Senate Facilities and Operations Committee. The CCH is dissolved after the issuance of its final report.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect upon enactment.