
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

SCR 8406

Brief Description: Reestablishing the joint select committee on civic health.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick, Muzzall, Conway, Liias, Nobles, Pedersen, Slatter, Stanford and Wilson, C.; by request of Lieutenant Governor.

Brief Summary of Concurrent Resolution

- Reestablishes the Joint Select Committee on Civic Health to build upon the work of the Project for Civic Health.

Hearing Date: 2/18/26

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, 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

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of social media while diminishing its harms; working on unifying civic projects; and building media literacy.

The roundtable report served as a foundation for discussions at the Project for Civic Health 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.

In 2024 the Legislature established the Joint Select Committee on Civic Health to build upon the work of the Project. The committee 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 of Representatives.

The Lieutenant Governor serves as the chair of the committee and one member of the majority party and one member of the minority party from opposite chambers serve as vice chairs.

The committee issued its final recommendations and report in January 2026 and subsequently expired. Prior to its termination, the committee members unanimously endorsed the idea of continuing the committee and expanding the membership from three members of each caucus to four members.

Summary of Bill:

The Joint Select Committee on Civic Health is reestablished to build upon the work of the Project for Civic Health.

As reestablished, the committee consists of 17 members:

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

All expenses and staff support for the committee shall be provided by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, except that travel expenses of legislative members will be reimbursed by the Senate and House of Representatives.

The committee must issue a report on its work to the Legislature prior to the 2027, 2028, and 2029 regular legislative sessions. Authorization for the committee expires at the start of the 2029 regular legislative session.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.