



SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE TO PRODUCE NEW RESEARCH ON CIVICS

Premier Study Finds New Evidence of Both Mother-to-Child (Trickle-Down) and Child-to-Mother (Trickle-Up) Relationships in Civic Education and Engagement

September 12, 2023 (PHOENIX, AZ) – The Sandra Day O'Connor Institute for American Democracy today announced an initiative to support new research on civics and also published its premier policy brief, titled *New Evidence on Trickle-Down and Trickle-Up Influences in Civic Education and Engagement*.

Conducted by Kirsten Slungaard Mumma, Ph.D., assistant professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, the brief evaluated K-12, birth, and voting records for over 580,000 students from the state of Indiana. It found evidence of significant trickle-down (mother-to-child) and trickle-up (child-to-mother) relationships in civic education and engagement. Children whose mothers voted in the previous presidential election, for example, were 20.3 percentage points more likely to vote in their first election. That indicates a 64% increase in the probability of voting.

The brief found that trickle-up relationships—in which the political behavior of children influences that of their mothers—are also broadly significant but are largest for non-white children and children who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. This suggests a pathway for “spillover effects” for civic education and engagement interventions, meaning these interventions could improve civic outcomes not only for students but also for their families.

“These findings are novel, major, and exciting,” said Institute Director of Public Policy Liam Julian. “They will be of serious interest to national, state, and local elected representatives; to social scientists; to educators; and, of course, to parents and their children.”

New Evidence on Trickle-Down and Trickle-Up Influences in Civic Education and Engagement is the first of several policy briefs and research reports on civics that the O'Connor Institute will publish over the coming months and years.

“High-quality research in civics is especially crucial now,” said Matt Feeney, chair of the O'Connor Institute's Board of Directors. “We are honored to carry forward the civics legacy of Justice O'Connor by investing resources in creating new civics knowledge to help inform our nation's parents, educators, civic leaders, and public policy decisionmakers.”

To read the full policy brief, visit www.OConnorInstitute.org/research

About Kirsten Slungaard Mumma, Ph.D.

Kirsten Slungaard Mumma is assistant professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She holds an A.B., an Ed.M., and a Ph.D., all from Harvard. Her research is in the economics of education. She studies how education programs and policies affect the economic, social, and political outcomes of children and adults.

About the Sandra Day O'Connor Institute for American Democracy

Founded in 2009 by retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the O'Connor Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3), continues her distinguished legacy and lifetime work to advance American democracy through multigenerational civil discourse, civic engagement and civics education.

Media Contact: Heather Schader | heather@oconnorinstitute.org | 602-730-3300 x8