

Dear Educators, Lawyers, Judges and Fellow Pennsylvanians:

Authority, Justice, Responsibility, Privacyare more than the words of a rap song sung to me by first graders at Roosevelt elementary school in Allentown, PA. Their use of these words is the profound expression by young students who “get it” who truly understand, even at a young age, the meaning of the words as they relate to the rule of law and the rights and responsibilities of citizens in our society. It would be wonderful if all of our youth truly understood those words and incorporated them in their daily activities. Research shows that by understanding these concepts the climate of the school changes, discipline improves along with test scores.



As a Federal Judge, First Lady of Pennsylvania and citizen it is important to me that the youth of Pennsylvania understand these concepts. This is why, I have made civics education the cornerstone of my initiative as first lady. I have been privileged to travel across this great Commonwealth, visit its classrooms, and encounter so many bright young minds. The intellect and enthusiasm exhibited by our youngest citizens has given me great hope for our future. If we want to see our children grow into an engaged and informed electorate, we must educate them about the American system of government. We must instill in them an understanding of democratic principles and a sense of social responsibility. Finally, we must give them hope for the future, instead of cynicism about the present.

In order to make certain that this civic learning is experienced by all children of our Commonwealth, we created PennCORD, the Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy. Joining me as lead partners in this endeavor are the Pennsylvania Bar Association, The National Constitution Center and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Our goal is to make certain that every Pennsylvania school student has the knowledge, skills and dispositions of effective citizens.

To help in this effort, I invite each of you to participate in the *Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Celebrate the Constitution Program* and take advantage of the resources provided by the Pennsylvania Bar at their web site www.pabar.org or call toll-free at (800) 932-0311, ext. 2256. I also ask you to consider inviting a local attorney, judge or legislator into your classroom. Thank you so much for your help and great work in raising the next generation of Pennsylvania’s engaged citizen!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marjorie O. Rendell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Judge Marjorie O. Rendell
First Lady
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania