

Governor's Weekly Message Transcript: Encouraging Civic Engagement Among Youth

As Washington gridlock continues to damage Americans' trust in government, we face serious challenges in attracting a new generation of our best and brightest to be involved in public service and engaged in shaping public policy. Young people increasingly believe that political involvement does not lead to tangible results. And they don't believe it can meet the challenges we face. At a time when those challenges have never been greater for our state and nation, we've got to ensure our youth appreciate the relevance for them when decisions are made not only in Washington, but also in Dover, and in other local governments.

In recent visits to Delaware high schools, I've emphasized that civic engagement is one of the most powerful ways to give back to your community. But those discussions aren't enough. I encourage all of you who have the opportunity to interact with our young people in educational settings – our teachers and mentors, and most especially our parents – to spread the message that Robert Kennedy so eloquently articulated: “The principle on which this country was founded,” he said, “is that direct participation in political activity is what makes a free society.”

Studies show our students have an impressive commitment to volunteerism. They want to make a difference in our communities. So we need to ensure they understand just how much those communities are shaped by public servants, from how we support our schools to the capabilities of our police and fire departments. By helping our youth understand the value of public service and political involvement – no matter their

viewpoints – we'll keep Delaware moving forward.