

WE THE PEOPLE AND POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

We the People students and alumni know significantly more about American government than the general public, including those who have taken a basic civics course. These findings are from a study conducted by a research team at Georgetown University that compares 2011 We the People students and program alumni to a representative national sample of the U.S. population.

A strong majority of 2011 We the People students demonstrate core knowledge of American institutions, the U.S. Constitution, and the electoral process. Comparing 2011 We the People students a national sample of young people (age 18 and 19), the study finds that:

*90% of 2011 We the People students correctly identified the Speaker of the House as following the Vice President in U.S. presidential succession compared to 35% of young people in the national sample.

*80% of 2011 We the People students named the correct number of U.S. senators compared to 48% of young people.

*73% of 2011 We the People students stated the length of the term of office for members of the U.S. compared to 43% of young people.

*88% of 2011 We the People students know that there are nine justices on the U.S. Supreme Court compared to 38% of young people.

*91% of 2011 We the People students know the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution compared to 35% of young people.

*77% of 2011 We the People students know that ties in presidential elections are *not* determined by the Supreme Court compared to 40% of young people.

Students who participated in the 2011 We the People National Finals exhibited very high levels of political knowledge.

We the People program alumni, some of whom have been out of high school for more than two decades, retain knowledge about government, and exhibit higher levels of knowledge than the general public. Comparing We the People alumni (pre 2011) to a national sample representing the U.S. population, the study finds that:

*85% of We the People alumni correctly identified the Speaker of the House as following the Vice President in U.S. presidential succession compared to 46% of the general public.

*80% of We the People alumni named the correct number of U.S. senators compared to 46% of the general public.

*68% of We the People alumni stated the length of the term of office for members of the U.S. compared to 42% of the general public.

*85% of We the People alumni know that there are nine justices on the U.S. Supreme Court compared to 41% of the general public.

*87% of We the People alumni know the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution compared to 27% of the general public.

*71% of We the People alumni know that ties in presidential elections are *not* determined by the Supreme Court compared to 46% of the general public.

Political Knowledge

	2011 WTP National Finalists	2011 WTP National Finalists	National Sample (age 18-19)	WTP Alumni Sample	National Sample
Presidential Succession	90%	94%	35%	85%	46%
# of U.S. Senators	80%	92%	48%	80%	52%
U.S. House Member Term	73%	80%	43%	68%	42%
# Supreme Court Justices	88%	92%	38%	85%	41%
1 st Amendment to Constitution	91%	97%	35%	87%	27%
Election	77%	86%	40%	71%	46%

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