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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Report Finds North Carolina Millennials Not Engaged in Civic Life

Chapel Hill, N.C. – The North Carolina Civic Health Index 2010 indicates that North Carolina has the potential to flex its civic might, but there are serious gaps in civic participation that are cause for concern. The results of the Index were announced on Oct. 23 in Winston-Salem at the North Carolina League of Municipalities’ 2010 Youth Summit by Kelley O’Brien, director of the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium.

North Carolina is one of 13 states and four cities that partnered with the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) to assess state and local civic health with the purpose of documenting—and ultimately improving—civic engagement in North Carolina. The Index includes recommendations for individuals, policymakers, educators, and community organizations about ways to improve the state’s civic health.

Key Findings:

- North Carolina’s young people—the future leaders of our state and our communities—are the least civically engaged of any age group in North Carolina. Without civic engagement among young people, the civic health of the state lies in the balance.
- The state’s civil society—the voluntary and social organizations that make our communities work—is led by a small and homogeneous group of older, college-educated, mostly white residents who are involved in religious organizations. Moreover, few young people, Hispanics and African Americans are participating in groups or organizations. These gaps along economic, geographic and educational lines, if not addressed, have the potential to perpetuate a cycle of civic apathy.
- North Carolinians without college experience are notably more likely to have strong personal connections to family and friends and to help neighbors than those who have some college education. Rural residents have a higher level of “connectedness” than those living in metropolitan areas.
- North Carolinians with some college education are more than twice as likely as those with no college experience to access the news frequently and engage in political discussions with others.
- Voting in the 2008 Presidential election is the single measure of civic engagement on which North Carolina performs above the national average.

David B. Smith, executive director of NCoC, said, “We hope that this report serves as a vehicle to empower North Carolinians to turn inward to solve local problems, thereby creating a more active and engaged citizenry.”

NCoC has published America’s Civic Health Index annually since 2006. In 2009, NCoC formalized a partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau and the Corporation for National and Community Service to develop, refine and implement annual measures of America’s civic health. North Carolina’s Civic Health Index is overseen by a team of organizations committed to advancing civic engagement in North Carolina, including Democracy North Carolina, North Carolina Campus Compact, the North Carolina Center for Voter Education, the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, and the Department of Public Policy at Western Carolina University. Funding to support the Index was provided by the Center for Civic Education.

The North Carolina Civic Health Index 2010 is available at www.civics.org/ncchi/. The website includes a thorough examination of key findings, recommendations, hi-resolution charts and contact information for all partner organizations.

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