

VIRTUAL NORTH AMERICAN STUDENT CONGRESS | OCTOBER 3, 2026

A Republic We Inherit, or a Republic We Keep?

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250

years of the American Republic.

Wars, Depressions,
Assassinations, Slavery,
Segregation, Protest,
Elections that united us, and
elections that almost
finished us.

The Republic is still here. Are we?

PHILADELPHIA, 1787

**“A republic,
if you can keep it.”**

Benjamin Franklin, answering Elizabeth Willing Powel outside the Constitutional Convention.

**Every generation inherits the sentence. Ours inherited
the question mark.**

MIAMI, FLORIDA

1

A Disconnect

Young people being excluded from every decision-making process.

2

A Chance

An opportunity to have a seat at the table and reform the system.

3

A Legacy

The impact we have on the institutions we shape.



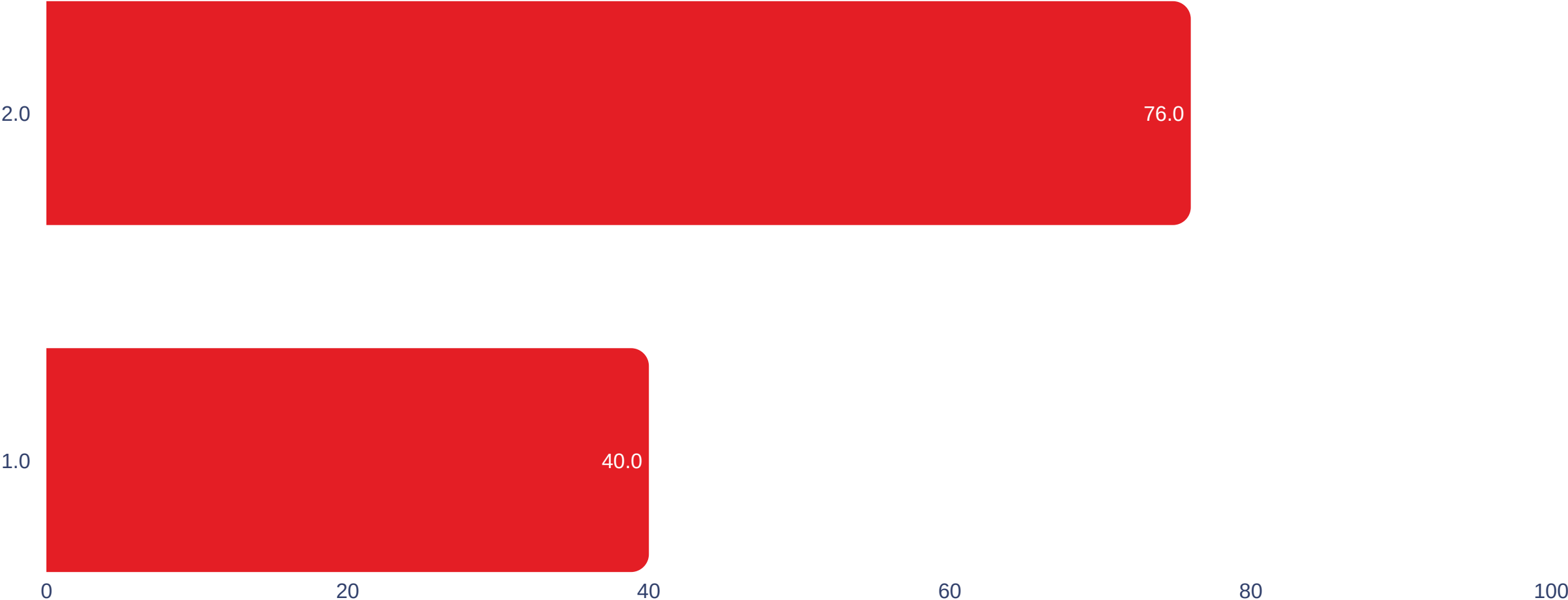
WHAT CIVIC EDUCATION IS SUPPOSED TO DO

From the page, to the person, to city hall.

- 1 A flyer** Government was a piece of paper.
- 2 An internship** Government became a room.
- 3 Legislation** Government became a decision.
- 4 A school zone** Government became a street I walk on.



Belief is not the shortage. The invitation is.



We work in the space between those two numbers.

Thirty six points of distance between what young people believe and what they feel invited to do.

Source: CIRCLE, Tufts University

Students do not first encounter government when they are old enough to vote. They encounter it when somebody hands them a seat.

VIRTUTEM POPULO, INC.

Educate. Activate. Advocate.

Education without activation makes spectators. Activation without education makes noise.



01 EDUCATE

Knowledge

The Constitution, government structure, economics and media literacy, built as competition.



02 ACTIVATE

Practice

Simulations, government access and site visits in rooms where students must speak.



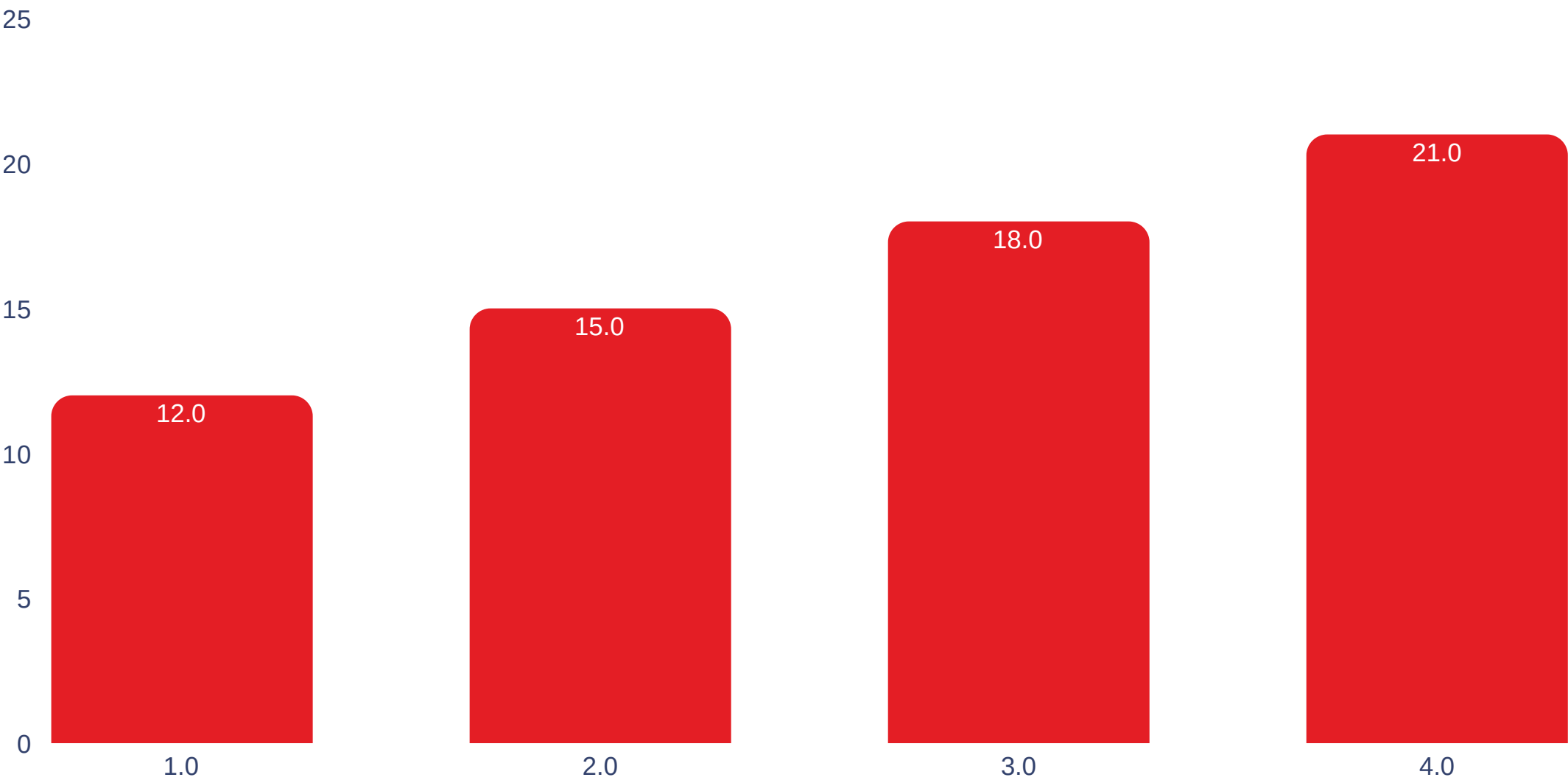
03 ADVOCATE

Contribution

Public comment, policy proposals and testimony carried to the people who can act.

What happens when you hand a young person a seat.

Schools competing in the Civic Knowledge Bowl



23

Municipalities have handed a student the chair since 2024.

20

Fellows studied the County economy and testified before a Board of County Commissioners committee.

330,000+

Students whose legislative interests are now represented in Miami-Dade.

Civil discourse is not agreement. It is what keeps disagreement from becoming destruction.

- Can you hear something you hate and still listen?
- Can I defend what I believe without destroying your dignity?
- Can we disagree about America without giving up on America?



Students who learn to argue well in public do not stop arguing. They stop breaking things.

**We will not lack information.
We may lack wisdom.**

1 Artificial intelligence

Can write our arguments.

2 Algorithms

Can choose our enemies.

3 Deepfakes

Can manufacture our evidence.

4 Social media

Rewards loud before it rewards right.

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS LATER

A republic?

We intend to keep it.

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