



Beyond the Deliberation: Resources for Continued Engagement on Reforming the Supreme Court

One of the key deliberative dispositions that the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) has identified is an “action orientation.” While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to shared agreement on key issues and an intentional commitment to take either individual or collective action on them.

Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve issuing a set of recommendations or deciding to support a particular policy. It might also manifest as developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, participating in continued discussions, or generating new approaches to engaging with the issue.

To support such an orientation, the DCI shares a series of “action pathways” for participants to consider after each event or activity it sponsors. Please see the pathways below related to the topic of “**Reforming the Supreme Court.**” Engaging in these activities is of course voluntary -- participants are free to choose any of the pathways, or none. But we encourage you to at least consider them as options that can build on the conversation you just had with your fellow deliberative citizens.

Get Informed

Understanding the current state of the Supreme Court:

- Learn about President Biden’s [Commission on Supreme Court Reform](#)
- Listen to [audio transcripts of oral arguments](#) at the Supreme Court
- Follow the [SCOTUS Blog](#) to stay up to date with the Supreme Court’s cases, petitions, and activities
- Watch “[How Do U.S. Supreme Court Justices Get Appointed](#)” on TED to learn about the current process for nominating justices
- Learn about the [federal judiciary](#) more generally from the US Dept. of Justice
- Explore the different roles, structures, and needs of both the federal and state courts from [uscourts.gov](#).

Exploring “Reforming the Supreme Court” panelists’ perspectives:

- Learn more about the powers of the Chief Justice by reading “[Responding to a Democratic Deficit: Limiting the Powers and the Term of the Chief Justice of the United States,](#)” by Judith Resnik and Lane Dilg

- Read an argument about making the Court less powerful by Ryan D. Doerfler and Samuel Moyn – [“Reform the Court, but Don’t Pack It”](#)
- Learn about Kent Greenfield’s idea for a new Constitutional Court in [“How to Fix the Supreme Court”](#)
- Read about the parameters and benefits of requiring 18-year term limits for Supreme Court Justices in [“Term Limits for the Supreme Court: Life Tenure Reconsidered,”](#) by James Lindgren and Steven Calabresi

Other perspectives on SCOTUS reform in the media:

- Read [“Reforming the Court”](#) by John Grove, published recently in the Winter 2020 edition of *National Affairs*
- Watch [“Is there a path forward for court reform?”](#), a panel hosted by the Brookings Institution in January 2021

Get Connected

- Connect with the [Federalist Society](#), a group dedicated to conservative and libertarian approach to Court reforms, or the [Judicial Crisis Network](#), an organization supporting judicial nominations of individuals who endorse limited government and the rule of law
- Connect with the group [Demand Justice](#) or the Alliance for Justice’s [Building the Bench](#) project, which campaigns for progressive Supreme Court reforms and qualified individuals with diverse backgrounds to be nominated to the federal courts
- Join [a student political organization](#) at Davidson College to discuss your ideas about the Supreme Court

Get Involved

- [Contact your U.S. Representative](#) and encourage them to support or block the passage of [H.R.8424, “Supreme Court Term Limits and Regular Appointments Act of 2020,”](#) which would establish 18-year term limits for Supreme Court Justices and limit the Senate’s advice and consent authority in relation to the appointment of justices
- Write to your US senators to call on them to give fair consideration to all presidential nominees
- Once it is established, reach out to President Biden’s commission on judicial reform with your ideas about how to reform the court
- Support the work of the nonpartisan Project on Government Oversight (POGO) on the [courts](#) and its [Constitution Project](#) to bridge the partisan divide over constitutional rights and liberties.
- Look into how you can support the needs of state courts in your state

About This Guide

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The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for Davidson students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community to productively engage with one another on difficult and contentious issues facing our community and society. The DCI regularly hosts facilitated deliberations on a wide range of topics and organizes training workshops for deliberation facilitators. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org.

DCI Deliberation Guides

The DCI has launched this series of Deliberation Guides as a foundation for such conversations. They provide both important background information on the topics in question and a specific framework for engaging with these topics. The Guides are designed to be informative without being overwhelming and structured without being inflexible. They cover a range of topics and come in a variety of formats but share several common elements, including opportunities to commit to a shared set of Conversation Agreements, learn about diverse perspectives, and reflect together on the conversation and its yield. The DCI encourages conversations based on these guides to be moderated by a trained facilitator. After each conversation, the DCI also suggests that its associated Pathways Guide be distributed to the conversation's participants.

DCI Pathways Guides

For every Deliberation Guide, the DCI has also developed an associated Pathways Guide, which outlines opportunities for action that participants can consider that are related to the covered topic. These Pathways Guides reinforce the DCI's commitment to an action orientation, a key deliberative disposition. While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to individual or collective action on the key issues facing society. Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, generating new approaches to an issue, or deciding to support a particular policy.

If you make use of this guide in a deliberation, please provide attribution to the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative and email dci@deliberativecitizenship.org to tell us about your event. To access more of our growing library of Deliberation Guides, Pathways Guides and other resources, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org/readings-and-resources.

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