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Voice Of the People Announces Partnership with University of Virginia for Citizen Cabinet Initiative

Center for Survey Research to manage recruitment

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Voice Of the People (VOP) President Steven Kull today announced a partnership with the University of Virginia’s Center for Survey Research (CSR) for VOP’s launch of the Citizen Cabinet. CSR will be responsible for managing the recruitment of Citizen Cabinet members in Virginia as well as other parts of the country.

“We are delighted to be working with the University of Virginia on our Citizen Cabinet initiative in the Old Dominion,” Kull said. “The Center for Survey Research will be meeting the highest scientific standards in putting together a Citizen Cabinet that reflects the state’s demographic makeup, and will be an ideal partner for analyzing the data on each issue. It will be an exceptional team endeavor.”

VOP is a non-partisan organization that is working to give the American people a more impactful voice in the policymaking process. It seeks to do this by creating Citizen Cabinets at the national, state and district levels. These are large standing panels comprised of a representative sample of the citizens in each jurisdiction, to be consulted on current issues, using new online interactive tools called ‘policymaking simulations’ to give voice to the people on an unprecedented scale. Virginia is one of three states selected for the pilot phase of the program (joining Oklahoma and Maryland).

Over the next two weeks selected Virginia households will receive a letter inviting them to join the Citizen Cabinet. Once recruited, the Citizen Cabinet will consist of approximately 500 households in Virginia; they will be scientifically selected to be

representative of the Commonwealth. Internet access will be provided to those who do not have it.

Every few weeks, members of the Citizen Cabinet will go through an online policymaking simulation which simulates the process elected officials go through when dealing with an issue.

In each policymaking simulation, Citizen Cabinet members will:

- Be briefed on the issues, with unbiased background information reviewed by experts and congressional staff from both parties in advance.
- Weigh the arguments, learning about the policy options that are actually on the table and evaluate the pro and con arguments on each option.
- Make choices from a menu of policy options, or go through a more in-depth process that requires making trade-offs (e.g. creating a budget), and finally, make their recommendations on the pressing issues facing Congress.

Once the Cabinet findings are presented, other members of the public may also do the policymaking simulation at [VOP's website](http://www.vop.org/consultations/) (www.vop.org/consultations/) where each participant can let their member of Congress know what they think about the issue at hand.

“The Founders believed that government works best when it is guided by the good sense of the people,” said CSR founding Director Thomas M. Guterbock. “Our university – established by Thomas Jefferson – shares in that ideal. The Citizen Cabinet presents a rare opportunity to strengthen communication between citizens and their elected representatives, and we’re excited to be able to help launch it.”

The Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia is a full-service academic survey research facility. It specializes in studies for local government and state agencies. As a full-service facility, CSR offers customized project design, professional interviewing, data collection, data analysis and report preparation. It also provides the technical resources needed for survey research of the highest scientific quality to clients both within and outside the University of Virginia.

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Voice Of the People is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that uses innovative methods and technology to give the American people a more effective voice in government.