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*The Forum for America's Ideas*

# Using Technology to Connect to Constituents

*May 2, 2013*



*Pam Greenberg, NCSL*



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# Agenda

- I. Types of online public participation tools**
- II. Online surveys and issue dialogues**
- III. Key research and recommendations**
- IV. Online town halls, crowdsourcing, video chat**
- V. Tips and resources**



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# Online Public Participation Tools


- **Online surveys**
- **Issue dialogues, blogs**
- **Online collaboration, wikis**
- **Crowdsourcing**
- **Online chat (e.g., Twitter town halls)**
- **Group video chat, video hearings**



# Online Opinion Polls (Bills)

Share your Opinion

Home - NELIS - Search - View Scheduled Meetings -



## 77TH (2013) SESSION OF THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE

SHARE YOUR OPINION WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

[Reports](#) | [View Comments](#) | [Submit Another Opinion](#)

The Opinion Poll portion of this site contains constituent opinions for the 77th (2013) Session of the Nevada Legislature. Feel free to view constituent opinions by clicking on the links above.

Throughout a legislative session, legislators review these opinions to gain perspective on how constituents in their districts feel about legislation. Constituent names, addresses and other personal information are NOT made public, but are available to legislators so that they will know who is submitting the comment and are able to contact the constituent if they so desire. Only opinion totals and comments are made publicly available on this site.

Thank you for participating in your government.

### Bill Information and Opinion

Please share your thoughts.

**Select Bill**

**Or type the bill name here**  then click on the button  Example: **AB362**

**Your View** For  Against

**Any Comments?**

Not required. Maximum 2000 characters.





# Budget Forums



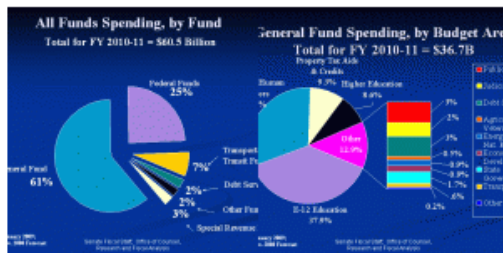
## Welcome to the Senate Budget Discussion

Jan. 12, 2009 in [General State Budget](#) Comments Off

**Thank you for visiting the Minnesota State Senate's Budget Discussion Website. This is an online community designed to invite you to contribute your ideas on the state budget. Your ideas will help the Senate develop a budget that reflects the values and needs of our communities.**

During this Session, the state will set its budget for the next two fiscal years: July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011. The November 2008 economic forecast revealed that the state government faces a deficit of more than \$4.8 billion dollars over the next two years. This is a very significant budget deficit. In order to create a balanced budget for the next two years, we will need to consider all ideas and be creative in finding solutions. All Minnesotans will need to be a part of the decision-making process.

To set the frame for the discussions, the charts below help explain the basics of the Minnesota budget. In the next tab, you will find a more extensive description of the budget and how state government is funded.



(click images to enlarge)

Below you will find discussion forums for each of the state's budget areas. We invite you to be part of these ongoing conversations. After the last committee deadline in the Senate, we will close the public comment feature of this website.

**Remember that you are always welcome to contact your local Senator by letter, telephone, email or personal visits to the Capitol. We hope that this website will be another way for you**



# Web Dialogues

Register Login Search Help About

WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**Higher Education** Dialogue on Access

Home Dialogue Agenda Discussion Panelists Participants Library Guidelines

July 23–25, 2007

## What can communities, colleges and universities and the state do to educate more students to higher levels?

The dialogue has concluded. The members of the [Higher Education Committee](#) invited a broad cross-section of Washingtonians and subject-area experts to join them in a web-based dialogue designed to both provide information and receive input as to how to expand access to higher education. The dialogue focused on the Committee's goal of educating more people to higher levels.

This dialogue presented an opportunity and a challenge to the policy makers and the citizens of Washington. The goal was to take the long view, think beyond individual interests, understand other perspectives, and define key issues.

The committee chair and ranking minority member are excited to use this web-based dialogue as a new method to hear from the public and will use the results of the dialogue in policy planning. They also intend to keep web dialogue participants involved in the legislative process throughout the fall and into the 2008 session. If you want to receive updates regarding related activities of the Committee you may still [register](#) on the site.

[Register to participate](#) or login below:

Login Name:

Password:

[Login/Password Help](#)

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

### [DIALOGUE SUMMARY](#)

- [What is a Web Dialogue?](#)
- [Quick Start Guide](#)



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# Web Dialogue Study Results



## Participants:

- View legislators more favorably
  - Feel they have more influence
- 
- Feel legislators better understand their views and priorities
  - Want to be more involved in the policymaking process, participate in more dialogues



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# Web Dialogue Study Results

## Participants:

- Gained a deeper understanding of the issues
- Considered new solutions to old problems
- Saw new opportunities for action
- Considered tradeoffs that might be necessary.

— WestEd, National Civic Review, 2008.





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# Congressional Online Town Halls Study Results

## Participants:

- Approval of the member increased
- More likely to vote and to vote for the member
- More likely to approve of the member's position on the issue
- More likely to try to persuade others on how to vote

— Congressional Management Foundation et al., 2009



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# Recommendations for Successful Online Town Hall Meetings

1. Focus on a timely and specific issue
2. Have neutral moderator, clear ground rules
3. Invite a broad sample of constituents
4. Allow unscripted, real-time interaction
5. Provide brief, unbiased information in advance

— Congressional Management Foundation, et al., 2009



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# Crowdsourcing Wiki

The Texas Red Tape Challenge



[Home](#)

[Skip to content](#)

## The Texas Red Tape Challenge

*A Policy Wiki Project of the House Government Efficiency & Reform Committee*

Active policy focus areas [\[ Show \]](#)

Archived policy focus areas [Hide](#)

[All Ideas](#)

[Off Topic](#)

1. Texas Higher Ed Open Government Challenge  
The Texas Red Tape Challenge and Crowdsourcing *Expired on 10/31/2012*

Providing Public Notice  
*Expired on 10/31/2012*

Rulemaking and Regulatory Negotiation Processes

## School Start Date : Policy Focus Area Ideas

In 2006, the Education Code was amended to require that all public school districts begin instruction on or after the fourth Monday in August. Before then, districts were required to adhere to a uniform school start date, but were allowed to petition the Texas Commissioner of Education for a waiver from that start date. The 2006 measure removed the ability of school districts to apply for a waiver. Now, with certain limited exceptions, all school districts are required to begin instruction [on or after the fourth Monday in August](#) (which is Monday, August 27th this year). Please review the statutes relating to this requirement (linked above) and click on the "Submit New Idea" button to offer your ideas or recommendations regarding this mandate, or to answer specific questions regarding its applicability.

[Recent \(2\)](#)

[Popular \(2\)](#)

[Hot \(0\)](#)

[My \(0\)](#)

[Random \(2\)](#)

SCHOOL START DATE »

Feedback Score

+26 **21** -5

### Uniform statewide school start date preferred

As a camp owner and seasonal employer, I feel the uniform school start date benefits both Texas families with children in different schools and young people who need summer jobs working in Texas. As a parent, grandparent and business person, I realize there are diverse opinions but do feel the uniform start date, whatever it may be, is of greatest benefit. One large plus to the current date is the utility and related ... [more](#) »



# Facebook and Twitter Town Halls

facebook



Search for people, places and things



After Irene CT

About ▾

## About

A Forum to share and discuss Connecticut's readiness & response to large-scale weather events and disasters.

### Description

Within a 14 month period Connecticut was put to the test: first with Tropical Storm Irene followed by the October 2011 Nor'easter; then almost one year later, Superstorm Sandy. Democratic leaders in the Connecticut state Senate believe it's an ongoing process to examine the quality and effectiveness of Connecticut's readiness and response to these events.

## Basic Info

Joined Facebook 09/12/2011

## Contact Info

Website <http://twitter.com/AfterIreneCT>



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# Facebook Town Hall

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The main video is titled "After Irene CT" and is from the channel "CTSenateDemocrats". The video has 74 views. A search bar is overlaid on the video with the text "Search 'After Irene CT'". The video player includes standard controls like play/pause, volume, and progress. To the right of the main video is a list of recommended videos:

- Effect of Connecticut Gun** by NRAVideos, 6,746 views, 10:56 duration.
- Judge Napolitano:** by Eduardo89rp, 5,416 views, 4:13 duration.
- Jackson, NH: Jackson Falls** by Bob White, 54,875 views, 3:46 duration.
- Sandy Hook Hoax: A Few Odd** by TheRicoman1973, 31,431 views, 12:35 duration.
- Public Hearing: Connecticut's** by CTSenateDemocrats, 54 views, 3:24 duration.

The browser's address bar shows "https://www.youtube.com/" and the taskbar at the bottom indicates "Internet" and "100%" zoom.



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## Online Video Chat

**STEVE URQUHART**  
UTAH STATE SENATOR

HOME    FACEBOOK    TWITTER

### ONLINE MTGS RE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN UTAH

November 9, 2011

I am holding meetings to discuss the future of higher education in Utah. Here is a link to sign up for the online meeting to be held Thursday, 11/10, at 10 a.m.:

[http://worldfunction.com/event-registration/?regevent\\_action=register&event\\_id=5](http://worldfunction.com/event-registration/?regevent_action=register&event_id=5)

We are discussing ideas to improve higher education in Utah. I've posted my ideas [here](#). Join the discussion!

*Share the knowledge!*

Facebook    Twitter    LinkedIn    YouTube    RSS    Email    Dribbble

#### TWITTER

#UTPOL  
**Utah's Political Discussion**

- utpolcapitol And that's all folks! Thanks for following along. #utpol #nerdprom  
19 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- utpolcapitol That didn't take long -> "@RepJesusHGun I've been in the US House for several years. I'm running for Senate in 2014" #utpol #nerdprom  
18 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- PRIDEinUtah RT @HuffPostPol: The White House just posted an Obama GIF to its Tumblr whitehouse.tumblr.com/post/4904560 #utpol  
18 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite



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## Google Hangout

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The main video is titled "PREK Act Hangout with Senator Jill Tokuda 03-22-13" and is uploaded by "Jill Tokuda · 6 videos". The video content shows a group of people in a meeting room, with a "Google" logo visible in the background. The video player includes a progress bar at 00:40 / 69:04 and various control icons. To the right of the main video is a list of recommended videos:

- Senator Tokuda's HSSC** by Jill Tokuda, 19 views, 12:14
- Castle High School Robotics** by Jill Tokuda, 15 views, 2:01
- McKinley High School** by Jill Tokuda, 38 views, 0:13
- Kanu Hawaii Capitol Workshop** by kanuhawaiiDOTorg, 36 views, 1:24:55
- VIDEO** by Jill Tokuda, 5 views, 1:05

The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with the "Internet" browser icon and a 100% zoom level.



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## **Tips from Town Halls**

1. Start with familiar topics and groups
2. Have a separate moderator, staff help
3. Include audio, or better, video of legislator
4. Publicize before and keep online after
5. Expect and embrace technical glitches
6. Celebrate your successes!





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## Resources

- [Twitter Town Hall Chats: Best Practices](#), HowTo.gov,
- Federal Web Managers Council
- [How to Get Results from Your Virtual Town Hall](#), Congressional Management Foundation
- [Online Town Hall Meetings: Exploring Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#), Congressional Management Foundation
- ["Using Online Tools to Engage--and be Engaged by--the Public"](#), IBM Center for the Business of Government Online
- [Online Platforms for Public Engagement](#), Wise Economy Workshop



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Thank you!



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