

Background on the Call for Civility and Community Ground Rules

The Utah 3Rs Project: The Utah 3Rs program has been a national demonstration project sponsored by the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center in Washington D.C. The program has been offered in public schools throughout Utah for over a decade. The civic principles of *rights, responsibilities and respect* grounded in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution have been shared with students, teachers and administrators with a particular emphasis on bridging our religious differences with civility, and appropriately addressing religious issues in schools. Due to its success, the program is now being integrated into the curriculum in all public schools by the Utah State Office of Education, and its principles are included in teacher training in many colleges and universities throughout Utah.

Process for Developing and Finalizing the Call to Civility and Community Document: In May 2008 a group of about 25 people who have worked with the Utah 3Rs Project over the years were convened to harvest how through the Utah 3Rs Project positive behavior changes have been achieved in Utah schools with regard to greater respect, civility, citizenship and community. There was an emphasis on discussing how based on this harvesting of 3Rs experience, the adult community of Utah might be influenced to help overcome the growing incivility and deterioration of community in Utah, as in America generally.

The wisdom that was culled from that convening was shared with a broader group of about 50 Utahns in August of 2008 who have shown a particular interest in this topic of Civility and Community, including state and local officials from all branches of government and both major political parties and many religious, education, business, legal and other civic leaders. In a half day convening that group crafted a Call to Civility and Community and some Ground Rules for the purpose of challenging all Utahns and particular our leaders and the media to a greater sense of responsibility for demonstrating civility and community in the context of the 3Rs principles.

A drafting committee fine tuned a draft of the document for review and input by selected Leadership in Utah, such as the Utah Supreme Court the Utah State Bar. The committee was comprised of Russ McKell a high school social studies and civics teacher, Brian Farr of the Utah State Attorney General's office who leads the division that addresses legal and constitutional issues for the Governor's office, and John Kesler recent past chair of the Constitutional Law Section of the Utah State Bar.

After receiving additional input from State leaders, the final document, "A CALL TO CIVILITY Ground Rules for Respectful Public Discourse" was presented to over 500 Utah leaders in the fifth annual *Dialogue on Democracy* on October 23, 2008. The citizens and leaders of the State of Utah were challenged to adopt this Call to Civility and Community. All citizens, leaders and major institutions of Utah will be invited to endorse this Call to Civility and Community.

During 2009 numerous demonstration projects will explore how we can best model civility and community by following these ground rules in our dealings with one another in Utah and as an example to the United States and the world.

Sponsoring Organizations: The primary convener of this project has been the Salt Lake Center for Engaging Community, with the support of the Utah 3Rs Project, and the Coalition of Civic, Character and Service Learning, composed of groups dedicated to civic education in Utah chaired by Chief Justice Christine Durham of the Utah Supreme Court.

Endorsements of the Call to Civility and Community Ground Rules as of March 12, 2009

Governor Huntsman

Lieutenant Governor Herbert

Attorney General Shurtleff

Chief Justice of the Utah Supreme Court, Durham

Salt Lake City Mayor Becker

Utah State Bar Association

Salt Lake Interfaith Round Table

Utah State Board of Education

Unanimous Joint Resolution both Houses Utah State Legislature

Editorial Support from Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News

Promotion Team Visiting Editorial Boards and Others in Support of the Ground Rules

Chief Justice Christine Durham

Attorney General Mark Shurtleff

Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker

Chair Interfaith Round Table Brian Farr

President Utah State Bar Association Nate Alder

Salt Lake Center for Engaging Community John Kesler