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CONTACT:

Tam Taylor, Center for Civic Education
(818) 591-9321, taylor@civiced.org

Phil Duncan, Center on Congress at Indiana University
(703) 237-1500, pduncan@civicatalyst.com

Staci Maiers, NEA Public Relations
(202) 822-7823, newsdeadline@nea.org

**Teachers from South Carolina, Virginia and Wyoming
Receive American Civic Education Teacher Awards**

WASHINGTON — Teachers from South Carolina, Virginia and Wyoming are recipients of the 2009 American Civic Education Teacher Awards, recognizing their exemplary work preparing young people to become informed and engaged citizens.

The ACETA winners are: Nate Breen of Cheyenne Central High School in Laramie County, Wyo.; Sarah Ann Richardson Turpin of Clemson Elementary School in Pickens County, S.C.; and Gregory Walsh of Falls Church High School in Fairfax County, Va.

The awards are given annually to elementary and secondary teachers of civics, government and related subjects who have demonstrated exceptional expertise, dynamism and creativity in motivating students to learn about the Constitution, Congress and public policy.

ACETA is sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress at Indiana University and the National Education Association.

Charles N. Quigley, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education, praised Breen, Turpin and Walsh for their dedication to teaching young people the responsibilities of citizenship in our democracy. "It is an honor to recognize teachers who are so enthusiastic about imparting the fundamental values and principles of our constitutional system of government," Quigley said.

Lee Hamilton, Director of the Center on Congress, lauded the awardees for "helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to work within the political system to make their communities and their nation

better." In presenting the awards, Hamilton said, "We call public attention to the fact that many teachers across the nation are doing an excellent job molding the civic character of America's youth."

"The awardees should be commended for their commitment to improving student learning and for leading by example to enhance the professionalism of civic education, which is essential to the preservation and improvement of a representative democracy," said Dennis Van Roekel, National Education Association president.

The ACETA winners receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in July to participate in an educational program that includes observing floor sessions and committee hearings in Congress, meeting members of Congress and other key officials, and visiting sites such as the National Archives and the U.S. Supreme Court.

The three awardees share a passion for explaining the work of government in an engaging way, and helping young people see that what goes on in Washington is relevant to their lives.

"I hope that my instruction helps students experience the excitement of citizenship, and the satisfaction of contributing to society," wrote Gregory Walsh, of Virginia, in his ACETA self-portrait essay. "Generating interest in the classroom, and at the same time opening doors to service in the community, can sustain lifelong commitments to both learning and service."

Wyoming's Nate Breen wrote, "The teacher's duty is to instill in the hearts of our students...an expectation of citizenship," which he described as "living and practicing tolerance, community service, hard work, and compassion. None of these virtues are present at birth. These virtues must be taught in the school and community, and modeled to our young."

And Sarah Ann Richardson Turpin of South Carolina wrote, "Strong civics education is essential to a strong democracy. It is our responsibility to teach our children and raise them to be informed, active citizens throughout their lifetime."

Each year the ACETA program selects and showcases three teachers whose students represent the diversity of the American public and private school systems. Applicants must be full-time classroom teachers of grades K-12. There is no fee to apply. In addition to a two-page self-portrait essay, applicants must submit three letters of recommendation — two

from teaching peers and one from their school principal. Applications and materials for the 2010 awards will be available online in January.

With the recognition this year of Breen, Turpin and Walsh, the ACETA program has now honored a dozen teachers since the awards were first given in 2006. The previous ACETA awardees:

Sally Broughton — Monforton Elementary School, Bozeman, Mont.
Christopher Cavanaugh — Plainfield High School, Plainfield, Ind.
Cheryl Cook-Kallio — Irvington High School, Fremont, Calif.
Mary Ellen Daneels — Community High School, West Chicago, Ill.
Barbara Simpson Ector — Cleveland Middle School, Cleveland, Tenn.
Kevin Fox — Arcadia High School, Arcadia, Calif.
Julie Kuhnhein — Highlands High School, Fort Thomas, Ky.
Galelyn McElroy — Central High School Magnet Career Academy,
Louisville, Ky.
Donna Paoletti Phillips — Robert Frost Middle School, Rockville, Md.

To learn more about ACETA, visit the Web sites of the sponsoring organizations.

About the Center for Civic Education (www.civiced.org)

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational organization dedicated to fostering the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy.

About the Center on Congress (www.centeroncongress.org)

The Center on Congress is a nonpartisan educational institution established in 1999 to help improve the public's understanding of Congress and to encourage civic engagement.

About NEA (www.nea.org)

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, college faculty, education support professionals, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers.

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