According to political theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, deliberative democracy requires that deliberation be an accessible process of reason-giving, based upon mutual respect and reciprocity among moral equals. Deliberative democracy is accessible in that deliberation is held in public and open to citizens to whom the deliberation effects. Through mutual respect and reciprocity, reasons should appeal to principles that individuals who are trying to find fair terms of cooperation cannot reasonably reject.

It is often assumed that such standards cannot be met, however the CSC is proud to say that our first Citizen Dialogue was a smashing success of deliberative democracy.

Brian Dickerson of the Detroit Free Press moderated a discussion on the Second Amendment, and although there were stark differences between James Makowski and Linda Brundage, the conversation found substantive common ground between the two sides. Each side was presented with clarity, reflecting the breadth of what is at stake when considering the rights of citizens to purchase, own, and sell firearms in the United States.

The great success of the evening was the communal conversation that occurred after the two sides presented their views on the issue. We hosted a lively and engaged crowd who reviewed the facts and points presented to them, and in small groups came together to write their own “headlines” to summarize each groups’ discussion.

For an issue that can be divisive for many, a common theme that surfaced from the breakout discussions seemed to be the fact that the right to bear arms is not disputed, but rather the extent of that right is what is at question. At what point do the ownership and sale of certain firearms move beyond a public good and become a concern for public safety?

The full video of the dialogue can be found here. The CSC would like to extend thanks once more to Brian Dickerson, Linda Brundage, and James Makowski for taking part in our first Citizen Dialogue. And thank you to all members of the community who came and participated!
The Center for the Study of Citizenship is involved in a new and exciting project. The concept for a **Program in Citizenship and Health** arose from activities within the CSC at WSU. Through the leadership of Marc Kruman and meetings with other leaders from the School of Medicine, the School of Social Work, the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences were held over the last year about the concept. Those meetings led to refinement of the concept and toward a retreat with Detroit citizen leaders from a broad array of backgrounds and organizations. Through the retreat process, a clearer understanding of what a Program for Citizenship and Health could be, and should do, arose.

- **Mission**: To serve the citizens of Detroit by fostering processes of engagement and evaluation, especially those of democratic action and deliberation, that allow community-based citizenship to flourish for the sake of public health improvement.

- **Vision**: The Program for Citizenship and Health will be known as the national leader for its innovative and effective approaches to citizenship and health to create a more holistic vision for public health and for the scholarly activities and products that disseminate that expertise across the country.

The CSC is **very excited** about this project, and we look forward to sharing more information in upcoming newsletters!
America has always been a nation of immigrants, but there is a sizable portion of those immigrants that enter the country illegally. While it may be easy to make judgments about this population, there are many legitimate reasons why some choose to enter the country illegally. The US limits the number of legal immigrants to 675,000 a year from around the world. In addition, no one country can represent more than 7% of the immigrants that year, a measure put in place to prevent any one group from dominating immigration patterns. There are 4 major ways of becoming a legal resident: being sponsored by an immediate relative who is an American citizen, being hired to work in America, seeking asylum/refugee status, or through the Diversity Visa lottery.

While these systems allow for a large number of legal immigrants to enter the US, it also is a very time-consuming process: For most countries, it takes unmarried children of US citizens more than 5 years to get through, and even longer for places with high immigration rates to the US, such as Mexico and China. Another problem is the strict eligibility requirements for legal immigration through those channels. The sponsoring family member must meet certain financial/relationship requirements, and employers must not have been able to find a qualified American worker for the job.

Eligibility for the Diversity Visa depends on experience and geographical region, and refugee/asylum seekers must face a “well-founded fear of persecution”—poor economic conditions do not count. Put in its proper context, it becomes more understandable why an estimated 11.1 million immigrants living in the US in 2014 were illegal.

However, there are serious issues attached to illegal immigration, especially in this day and age. Chief among them are questions of safety and livelihood: Who are these people? What will they do to make a living? How will they affect the rest of us? Knowing this, illegal immigration has been a hot topic for the 2016 presidential election, specifically around those coming from Mexico and Central America.

Trump campaigned on a platform that prioritizes non-immigrant Americans, as he wants to ensure that jobs are offered to American citizens first. He also wants to end “catch-and-release practices”, saying that those caught entering illegally will be detained until removed from the country. Furthermore, he wants to implement “extreme vetting” for immigration applicants to make sure they support American values, and to suspend immigration from places that “export terrorism”. He has also notoriously proposed to build a wall along the southern border, and insisted that Mexico would be responsible for funding the construction.

Whether or not President-Elect Trump will try to fulfill the promises of candidate Trump is yet to be seen, but one thing for certain is that immigration policy will be one area that those concerned with citizenship will keep a close eye on.

Political Scientist Larry Bartels tells us that the 2016 election may not be as extraordinary as some fear … What might a Trump presidency mean for birth control, climate, and immigration? … A call for Trump to denounce the hate associated with his name and campaign.
In the aftermath of this year’s hotly contested and very ugly presidential election, which was often marked by violent acts and even more violent words, it is essential to focus on the responsibilities imposed by citizenship. Only informed, active citizens can build and sustain vital communities. Although Donald Trump won the election with a majority of the Electoral College votes, Hillary Clinton will likely earn a popular majority. In 2016, Americans spoke at or over one another, not to one another. Incivility won, civility lost. Shouting won, listening lost. Governance has become a zero-sum game with winners and losers, and the meaning of community has shriveled. For many, fear has replaced hope. At the same time, citizens lament the state of affairs. They are disgusted with politics and distrustful of government and its leaders. Popular disenchantment is reflected in lower popular turnout. In an expanding electorate, Donald Trump received fewer total votes than Republican Mitt Romney had in 2012 and Hillary Clinton’s total, though higher than Trump’s, was significantly lower than the votes cast for President Barack Obama. About 80 million registered voters did not vote, and another 30 million citizens did not register.

The Center seeks to reverse this trend and to build bridges across ideological divides by providing a model for civil, civic conversations about controversial public issues. Just before the presidential election, the Center for the Study of Citizenship launched a new program, Citizen Dialogues, aimed at listening and conversation about issues that divide us. On October 17th, the Center’s inaugural dialogue focused on gun ownership and gun violence. As expected, Linda Brundage, Executive Director of the Michigan Coalition against Gun Violence, and James Makowski, General Counsel and Legislative Director of Michigan Gun Owners, Inc., offered very different perspectives. But under the skillful guidance of moderator Brian Dickerson, columnist and Deputy Editor of the Editorial Page of the Detroit Free Press, the speakers agreed about the people who should be prohibited from owning guns. We followed the debate with coffeehouse conversations led by well-trained facilitators, who followed a protocol that emphasized careful listening and understanding. In the next newsletter, look for an announcement of our second dialogue.

As the Center was planning the dialogue, it was accelerating development of its Citizenship for Health program. It is establishing the program in collaboration with non-profit health organizations, Detroit’s Department of Public Health, members of the business community and researchers across the WSU campus. The program’s goal is to turn patients into citizens by using the practice of deliberative democracy to identify both health-care needs and to develop community-based solutions. Our mission is to serve the citizens of Detroit by fostering processes of engagement and evaluation, especially those of democratic action and deliberation, which allow community-based citizenship to flourish for the sake of public health improvement. Look for updates in the next newsletter.

Marc Kruman
Director
Center for the Study of Citizenship