



Questions and petitions with public figures nationwide - <http://askthem.io>

AskThem (<http://askthem.io>) is a new website for questions-and-answers with public figures. Ask questions - and get answers - from everyone who represents you.

Individuals and organizations on AskThem can ask questions to any U.S. elected official and any verified Twitter account. There's never existed a free platform with such reach.

AskThem is open-source, non-profit, and non-partisan, with open data for informed communities. [AskThem](#) is a project of the [Participatory Politics Foundation](#), creators of [OpenCongress.org](#), a leading civic engagement website with over 26 million web visits.

Launched publicly on Feb. 10th, 2014, AskThem works like a version of the White House's "We The People" petition site, where over 10 million people have taken action, but for every elected official: federal, state, county, and municipal levels of government.

AskThem has official government data for over 142,000 elected officials nationwide, from local city council members up to the U.S. Congress. AskThem was supported by a charitable grant from the Knight Foundation's "Tech 4 Engagement" initiative.

- **Individuals and community groups** on AskThem can ask a question or create a petition to gather support for their issues. AskThem is the first open-source website to enable a visitor to enter a street address to see everyone who represents her, from federal down to local governments. Since launch, the platform has shown most traction at city council level.



- **Elected officials** who sign up with AskThem simply agree to respond to the most popular questions from their constituents in an open public forum (about two per month). 80 elected officials nationwide are signed-up, including two mayors, seven NYC Council members, dozens of state legislators, and five Austin, TX city councilors.

Which types of policy areas do users of civic engagement websites most want to ask their elected officials about? What types of policy areas do elected officials most want to address in responding to questions? How can city networks share policy ideas & text?

Questions on AskThem gather signatures like petitions towards a threshold. What empirical tests can we run on using our existing email list & allies to encourage getting questions to threshold, and therefore delivery? What is the lowest signature threshold at which different government jurisdictions - a city council member, a state legislator, a U.S. representative, a major city mayor - would respond to a public question?

For more information, contact David Moore at david@ppolitics.org or at 917-753-3462.