The background of the entire page is a photograph of the interior of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The room is filled with several rectangular tables covered in green cloths. Each table is surrounded by wooden chairs, some with curved backs and others with straight backs. On the tables, there are stacks of papers, books, and small decorative items like candle holders. A large, curved banner with a blue background and white stars hangs across the top of the room. The walls are light-colored with paneling, and there are large windows on the right side. The floor is a light-colored wood.

The Assembly Room of Independence Hall  
in Philadelphia where the  
U.S. Constitution was signed in 1787.

# SUSTAINING OUR FREEDOM

*Launching a campaign for Constitutional literacy*





# SUSTAINING OUR FREEDOM

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NATIONAL  
CONSTITUTIONAL LITERACY  
CAMPAIGN



## Introduction

By Julie Silverbrook And  
Chuck Stetson

It is appropriate to announce the launch of the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign in a special section of *The Washington Times*, because it was *The Washington Times* that brought us together. Shortly after reviewing *The Washington Times*' Pocket Constitution app, Julie reached out to Chuck, the driving force behind the launch of the app, as well as a complimentary Washington Times' Constitution Day 2014 special section, to schedule a meeting to discuss ways we could work together to promote civic education and constitutional literacy.

We met for an early breakfast in New York City shortly thereafter and over the course of an hour developed an ambitious new plan – to impact civic education by assembling the largest group of organizations devoted to promoting civic education and constitutional literacy across the learning spectrum – from kindergarten to the grave, as we now like to say.

Our backgrounds are different, but we are united by our passion for ensuring that America's citizens are actively and thoughtfully engaged. Chuck, a member of the baby boomer generation, is a venture capitalist with a passion for civic education and citizenship who started a non-profit called Essentials in Education. Julie, a millennial, is a recent law school graduate who has devoted her career to educating citizens of all ages about the United States Constitution and its history through The Constitutional Sources Project (ConSource).

We believe that without an understanding of the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights citizens cannot fully understand how the United States government functions and makes decisions that impact their daily lives. If you want to actively, thoughtfully, and meaningfully discuss and influence the major constitutional and political issues of the day, you must understand the full arc of United States constitutional history.

Recent reports, however, reflect a troubling decline in basic constitutional literacy. In 2014, the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania released a study that found that Americans know surprisingly little about their government. The survey found:

- While little more than a third of respondents (36 percent) could name all three branches of the U.S. government, just as many (35 percent) could not name a single one.
- Just over a quarter of Americans (27 percent) know it takes a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate to



but also through adulthood, so that citizens can comprehend the complex and often controversial constitutional issues that arise. That is why the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign is bringing together groups that aim to educate citizens of all ages about our nation's constitutional history.

To achieve our goals, we have assembled a broad and diverse group of organizations, including non-partisan non-profits like ConSource and Essentials in Education, for-profit organizations like *The Washington Times*, and organizations from both sides of the aisle who believe in the fundamental importance of constitutional literacy and civic education. We believe that by harnessing the power of organizations from the right, left, and center, we can reach and, ultimately, educate a much broader segment of the national population.

In this special section, you will hear from the Campaign's founding members about the following:

- The current crisis in civic education and constitutional literacy – the troubling statistics that show how little our citizens truly know about our system of government, the absence of support for civic education at colleges and universities, the lack of both government and private philanthropic support for the very organizations designed to address this crisis;

- The effective actions of organizations that are already inspiring our citizens about the Constitution and American government, including two pieces from members who were themselves inspired by the Constitution; and
- The movements to ensure that our citizens are informed and engaged.

During the Constitutional Convention in 1787, George Washington, as president of the Convention, sat in a chair with a rising sun on it. At the end of the Convention, Benjamin Franklin, looking toward the President's chair, observed to a few members near him that the painters had made it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising sun from a setting sun. He then said, "I have often in the course of th[is] session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now, at length, I have the happiness to know that it is a rising, and not a setting, sun."

We believe Franklin's remarks reflect the optimism of the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign. While you can look at the troubling statistics about civic education and see a setting sun, we are devoted to seeing that sun rise. Our organizations – and the many more we hope will soon join us – will ensure that we reverse the current trend in civic education and honor and preserve the republic established by the Framers 228 years ago.

We hope you will join us in making every day Constitution Day! To learn more about the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign, please visit [www.constitutiondays.org](http://www.constitutiondays.org), or email Julie Silverbrook at [Julie.Silverbrook@con-source.org](mailto:Julie.Silverbrook@con-source.org).

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*Julie Silverbrook is Executive Director of The Constitutional Sources Project (ConSource), a 501(c)(3) organization devoted to facilitating greater access to and understanding of United States Constitutional History. Please visit our website at [www.ConSource.org](http://www.ConSource.org) to learn more.*

*Chuck Stetson is CEO of the Stetson Family Office and a Managing Director and Founder of PEI Funds. He is also the Chairman and CEO of Essentials in Education, a non-profit educational publisher that seeks to enrich citizenship education. In conjunction with the Campaign's launch, Stetson is introducing a Freedom of America Series for high school students and adults. For more information, please see [www.constitutioncurriculum.org](http://www.constitutioncurriculum.org).*



# The crisis in civic education funding

By Julie Silverbrook

If you pick up a newspaper, magazine, or academic journal around Constitution Day, you are very likely to read about the troubling decline in civic knowledge and engagement in this country. The statistics I discussed in the introduction to this special section are startling.

What you are less likely to read about is the troubling decline in funding to support the very organizations seeking to address the deficit in civic knowledge. In 2011, federal funding for civics education through the U.S. Department of Education was zeroed out, cutting nearly \$35 million of support from the civics education community. We are also beginning to get a clearer picture of a correspondent decline in private philanthropic support for civics education and constitutional literacy.

Preliminary data from The Foundation Center's "Foundation Funding for U.S. Democracy"<sup>1</sup> resource shows that annual funding for civics education from private foundations over the last several years has remained perilously low. Based on the first round of research using data provided by the Foundation Center, we found that private foundation funding between the years 2011 and 2013 has stagnated between approximately \$33 million and \$41 million for the entire civic education community. While more research needs to be done to determine the exact amount of support from private foundations over the last several fiscal years, the prevailing sentiment in the community is that the overall amount will remain low, especially relative to current levels of support in other fields. By way of comparison, the Intel Foundation

gives approximately \$45 million in annual grants to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education. The Intel Foundation is one of hundreds of private foundations currently supporting STEM education.

The disparity in funding levels for the two communities is striking. While the proposed 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the Senate restores limited funding for history and civics education through competitive grants, it does not specify the total amount to be reinvested in this community. By comparison, the fiscal year 2015 budget proposal from the President includes over \$170 million to improve teaching and learning in STEM subjects.

This is consistent with an observation made by the Civic Mission of Schools in 2003 that, "[f]or decades, civic education curricula and programs [have] received decreasing amounts of time, money and attention while schools focused on preparing students for employment and for tests of academic progress. The traditional civic purpose of schools effectively has been forgotten." While STEM education is important and essential, so, too, is civics education.

In response to the multi-faceted crisis facing civics education, a number of robust coalitions and campaigns have been formed. The Civics Renewal Network,<sup>2</sup> a coalition of 26 non-profit and governmental organizations, including ConSource, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, iCivics, the Newseum and the National Constitution Center, is seeking to raise the visibility of K-12 civics education and to make high-quality resources

more accessible to educators. The National Constitutional Literacy Campaign, which is responsible for this special section, is a broad-based campaign that is bringing together non-partisan non-profit organizations, for-profit entities, and ideologically-oriented groups to promote constitutional literacy from kindergarten to the grave.

These efforts – like many others in the field – are currently being accomplished without major foundational support, something they could greatly benefit from. The coalitions and campaigns are supported by the voluntary efforts of members of the organizations and institutions that are leading this push. It's worth noting that many of the organizations volunteering their time and efforts are simultaneously facing budget shortfalls and, in some cases, barely have enough funding to cover staff costs and basic programming.

It is important to recognize the organizations that do continue to invest in civics education, while also noting that in many cases they are not funding at the same level as they have in the past. The top funders include (1) The Freedom Forum; (2) The Bank of America Charitable Foundation; (3) John William Pope Foundation; (4) Charles Koch Foundation; (5) Stephen Bechtel Fund; (6) John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; (7) The John Templeton Foundation; (8) Aurora Foundation; (9) Douglas & Maria DeVos Foundation; (10) The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Again, between 2011 and 2013, these organizations, among others, contributed between \$33 million and \$41 million to civics education.

This not only pales in comparison to the total amount invested in STEM education,

but will be eclipsed by the total amount of money raised to pay for the 2016 presidential election, which could cost upwards of \$5 billion. Political giving is distinct from other philanthropic giving, but it is difficult to square that level of support for campaigns with the fact that the very organizations that educate our citizens and ensure that our voters are informed and engaged face budget shortfalls and closing doors.

Retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor created iCivics and is perhaps the highest profile advocate for civics education. "It is imperative if we are going to survive as a nation that our schools teach civics," she said. "Knowledge and understanding about our system of government is not something that's handed down in the gene pool. You have to learn it." I would add that to learn it, you have to teach it, and to teach it effectively you need the time and resources to do so. That requires the federal government, private foundations, and individual philanthropists to reinvest in the constellation of organizations working to ensure that our nation's citizens are informed and engaged throughout their lives.

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Julie Silverbrook is Executive Director of The Constitutional Sources Project (ConSource), a 501(c)(3) organization devoted to facilitating greater access to and understanding of United States Constitutional History. Please visit our website at [www.ConSource.org](http://www.ConSource.org) to learn more.

<sup>1</sup><http://democracy.foundationcenter.org/>

<sup>2</sup><http://civicsrenewalnetwork.org/>

## Colleges are AWOL in their duty to teach the Constitution

By Molly Mitchell

A decade ago, Senator Robert Byrd spearheaded the designation of September 17th as Constitution Day. The holiday commemorates the momentous day in 1787 when 39 delegates in Philadelphia signed the Constitution. Byrd, a Democrat from West Virginia, added an amendment to an omnibus spending bill, mandating that all





# NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Recent reports reflect a troubling decline in basic constitutional literacy and civic knowledge. These statistics underscore the need for life-long civic education. Constitutional literacy should not only be emphasized in primary and secondary school, but also throughout a citizen's lifetime, so that they can comprehend the complex and often controversial constitutional issues that arise. That is why the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign is bringing together groups that aim to educate citizens along the learning spectrum – from kindergarten to adulthood—about our nation's constitutional history.

To achieve our goals, we have assembled a broad and diverse group of organizations, including non-partisan non-profits, for-profit organizations, and ideologically-oriented organizations who believe in the fundamental importance of constitutional literacy and civic education. We believe that by harnessing the power of organizations from the right, left, and center, we can reach and, ultimately, educate a much broader segment of the national population.

We hope you will join us in making every day Constitution Day! To learn more about the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign, please visit us at [constitutiondays.org](http://constitutiondays.org).

## OUR PARTNERS



Essentials in Education



The Marshall-Brennan  
Constitutional Literacy Project



The George Nethercutt Foundation

The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation





# COLLEGES

From page D4

publicly funded educational institutions provide programming to improve knowledge of the Constitution.

Was Senator Byrd's initiative unnecessary? Do college students really need training about the Constitution?

The higher education community doesn't seem to think so. From the beginning, they complained—oddly, to be sure—that the requirement interfered with their academic freedom. Just this year they renewed that opposition, calling on Congress to eliminate the Constitution Day teaching requirement as undue interference in universities' business.

So to repeat: Do college students really

need training about the Constitution? Sadly, the answer is a resounding yes.

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni's (ACTA) annual report, *"What Will They Learn?"* shows the root cause of these alarming findings. Out of 1,100 universities studied during the 2014–2015 academic year, only 18.3% of those schools required even a single foundational course in American government or history.

Instead of ensuring students have a basic foundation, too many colleges—and, yes, public institutions funded by taxpayer dollars—allow undergraduates to skip American history or government altogether or replace them with a narrow substitute. At the University of California–Berkeley, the U.S. history requirement can be replaced with "Dutch Culture and Society: Amsterdam and

Berkeley in the Sixties" and at the University of Colorado, it can be replaced with "America through Baseball" or "Horror Films and American Culture." Even students who major in history at prestigious institutions like Amherst, Bowdoin, and Bates can often avoid American history entirely.

While it is no doubt true that something can be learned from specialized classes, they should not be a replacement for an American history course or for knowledge about America's founding documents. Colleges and universities—and most especially their trustees—surely have an obligation to students, citizens, and taxpayers to ensure that our country's future leaders have a basic understanding of the Constitution and of U.S. history. That's why ACTA is writing

to more than 19,000 trustees this year, outlining how colleges and universities are largely AWOL in their duty to prepare informed and effective citizens, and urging them to do better.

.....  
*Molly Mitchell is Director of Communications of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, an independent nonprofit dedicated to academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability in American higher education. [www.goacta.org](http://www.goacta.org).*

Editor's Note: To find out whether your alma mater requires American history or government and how your alma mater ranks, go to <http://whatwilltheylearn.com/disciplines/history>

## States: Finding solutions, improving lives

By Utah Governor Gary R. Herbert

In 1788, James Madison wrote in *Federalist 45*: "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."

This concept of federalism has eroded even as states are leading this nation forward. While partisan politics can often stall work in Washington, D.C., states must push ahead and solve problems to ensure the future for our citizens.

As governors, we have an historic opportunity to build a more collaborative state-federal partnership, just as our founding fathers intended when they wrote the tenth amendment: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Governors have long held that federal action should be limited to those duties and powers delegated to the federal government under the Constitution. Congress should favor the preservation of state sovereignty when legislating or regulating activity in the states.

In fact, to ensure the proper balance between state and federal action and to promote a strong and cooperative state-federal relationship, governors encourage federal officials to adhere to certain principles that follow directly from the idea of a limited federal government.

First, Congress and the Administration should exercise forbearance. Federal action should be limited to situations in which constitutional authority for action is clear and certain and where the problems are truly national in scope.

Second, unless the national interest is at risk, federal action should not preempt additional state action. This is especially true in areas of primary state responsibility.



Third, Congress and the Administration must avoid imposing unfunded federal mandates. Federal action increasingly has relied on states to carry out policy initiatives without providing necessary funding to pay for these programs. The imposition of unfunded federal mandates is inconsistent with the vision of James Madison and the spirit of a genuine partnership.

Governors recognize the unique nature of the federal system and the critical importance of developing a close working relationship between states and the federal government. We also recognize and support a continued federal role in protecting the basic rights of all our citizens and in addressing issues beyond the capacity of individual states. At the same time, the federal government must recognize that there are problems that can be best addressed at the state and local levels.

Governors from across the political spectrum and the country are working to improve the way government operates, putting policies in place that better the

lives of people in this country. When I became chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), I made it my mission to highlight those efforts.

My chair's initiative, *States: Finding Solutions, Improving Lives* is about finding and highlighting real solutions to the issues we face every day. It's time to start looking to the real innovators—states—our laboratories of democracy. My work this year will showcase the breakthroughs happening in the 55 states, territories and commonwealths. The goal: Promote and share the best state-based solutions and show Washington, D.C., how it's done.

My colleagues in other states have implemented solutions that are innovative, relevant and good for the public. Between now and next summer, I will meet with several experts across state government, and I will visit states across the country to highlight the innovative work governors are doing each and every day. I will make sure this work is shared widely so all levels of government can benefit from the innovation of the states.

Making people's lives better is not a partisan issue. At a time when it's difficult to turn on the TV without seeing red versus blue, left versus right, states on both sides of the aisle are developing innovative answers to some of today's most pressing problems. That is why *States: Finding Solutions, Improving Lives* stands as a beacon of bipartisanship amid political rancor.

This is not about ideology; it's about results. Not only are states solving problems in the present, but we will need them to solve problems in the future, too. To ensure that success, we need to learn from one another's challenges and accomplishments.

Let me be clear: Some issues must be addressed at the national level. But developing solutions to others such as transportation, education, health care, economic development and public safety often rests with the states. Furthermore, federal agencies often are not equipped, nimble or flexible enough to deal with problems at the state and local levels. In fact, most "federal" programs are implemented by the states.

Just look at the federal and state budgets. In 2014, the federal budget was roughly \$3.5 trillion, which is about three times as large as the \$1.2 trillion approximate total of all 50 state budgets combined.

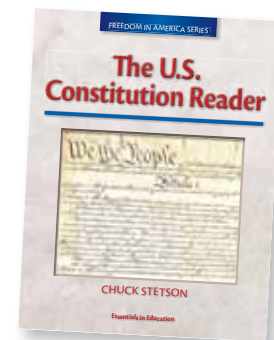
A balance of power between the states and the federal government is not only right and proper, it is essential if we are ever to find solutions to the complex problems we face as Americans. It is my hope that *States: Finding Solutions, Improving Lives* is a critical step toward moving this country forward consistent with the vision of our founding document.

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*Gary R. Herbert is governor of Utah and 2015–2016 chair of the National Governors Association.*

# ESSENTIALS IN EDUCATION

**Essentials in Education (EIE)** is a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)3 organization founded by Chuck Stetson and the Stetson Family Office. EIE's mission is to provide quality educational products that enrich lives. EIE's publications have focused on topics of importance to Americans—Bible Literacy, Marriage and Family, Character, Leadership, and the nation's founding documents. For more information, please visit our website at [www.essentialsineducation.org](http://www.essentialsineducation.org).

Essentials in Education has just published **The U.S. Constitution Reader**, the first in a series of texts in the **Freedom in America Series**. Visit our website at [www.constitutioncurriculum.org](http://www.constitutioncurriculum.org).



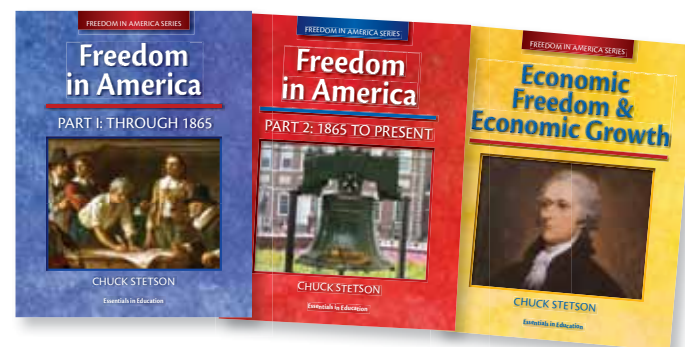
**The U.S. Constitution Reader accomplishes the following:**

- Presents the U.S. Constitution in the context in which it was written. Therefore, the Reader focuses first on two important documents that preceded the U.S. Constitution: the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation.
- Shows how the U.S. Constitution was created, then approved, by the States. The Reader reviews the discussion in the Federalist Papers that centered on the creation of the U.S. Constitution and its approval.
- Presents the history of the U.S. Constitution and the content of the Constitution. This is the main purpose of the Reader—to present this vital history in a way that is readable and understandable.

**Freedom in America traces the story of America's economic and political success through the perspective of the freedoms guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution:**

*Freedom in America Part I* traces the sources of the ideas of the Constitution in our English heritage, the colonial experience, and in the Revolutionary generation's leadership that led to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

*Freedom in America Part II* examines post-Constitution writing from 1865 through the present that centered on the questions regarding freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution.



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This economic history of the U.S. relates the country's economic growth to the freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. A unique comparative approach describes the success of the American economic engine in relation to the success (or failure) of other countries.

**The series will follow this publication schedule:**

- **Freedom in America Part I: Through 1865** ..... Available November 2015
- **Freedom in America Part II: 1865 to the Present** ..... Available February 2016
- **Economic Freedom and Economic Growth** ..... Available May 2016



**Chuck Stetson** is the third generation of his family to run the **Stetson Family Office**. Chuck is an entrepreneur and venture capitalist. The Stetson Family Office began **PEI Funds**, a private equity firm, in 1992 to invest in venture capital and smaller buyout funds. PEI Funds has an audited annually compounded 51 percent gross return and 37 percent net to investors. Chuck is a speaker on education in a variety of venues including to business leaders, community leaders, the staff of Congress, the White House, and leading universities. He has appeared on FOX News, CBS Sunday Morning, and The TODAY Show. His work at EIE has been featured in numerous Associated Press articles, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, and in an April 2007 cover story in TIME Magazine.

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Essentials in Education, founded by Chuck Stetson in 2001, is a non-profit educational organization which seeks to enrich education.



# The U.S. Constitution: A document to venerate and understand

By Wilfred McClay

Constitution Day on September 17th is a uniquely American holiday, far more unique than the Fourth of July. Many countries celebrate an independence day. But only the United States has a 228-year-old written Constitution that authoritatively shapes its national life. We don't often appreciate what an astonishing treasure that fact is, and how much we have to be grateful for in that regard. For it is not only an old Constitution, it is a wise Constitution; and it has become old precisely because it is wise, and has survived and outgrown all the unwise expedients offered to replace it.

Other countries, such as France, have lived under many different regimes, so that for them the nation is something distinct from its form of government. Not so for Americans, who have lived since the 1780s under the same regime, a remarkable fact the significance of which seems to escape us. We swim in its waters, unaware of the element that contains and sustains us. We revere our Constitution blandly, without troubling ourselves to know very much about it, and without reflecting much about what it says about our national identity.

Ties of race, religion and ethnicity have never been what binds us as Americans. We think of the management of our diversity as a recent issue, but the conduct of American life has always involved the negotiation of profound differences—difference of states and regions, of demographics, of economies and social arrangements. Our Constitution took it as a given that there would be such differences and that they, and our human imperfections, would generate endless conflicts. Ambitious individuals and power-hungry interests would always be among us, and their dangerous energies had to be properly channeled—not eliminated, not subdued, but guided in directions that would conduce to the greater good.

Our Constitution is, accordingly, short on soaring rhetoric, and long on procedure, laying out the complex rules of political engagement. Behind the familiar formulae of checks and balances, and the separation of powers, is a powerful idea: rather than trying to prevent conflict, this Constitution would presume conflict and even institutionalize it, thereby directing its effects to the

general good. Like an internal combustion engine, the Constitution uses the explosions within its chambers to drive the effort of American governance. But for that very reason it is not conducive to smooth or unanimous action flowing from centralized power. Indeed, the craving for centralized unanimity is precisely what it most distrusts. And so should we.

This aspect of the American system is ill-understood at home and abroad. When I gave a lecture in Ankara at the height of the Iraq War, a Turkish questioner wondered whether the intense conflict then going on in Washington meant that the American system was falling apart. When I responded, "But this is how the system is *supposed* to work," and that Congressional resistance to the President can be entirely proper and legitimate, the audience was incredulous. I would tell that audience precisely the same thing today, about Republican Congressional resistance to President Obama on various policy fronts. Such conflict can be a sign of health rather than weakness. It would be good if more Americans understood the ways in which the corrective energies of their system actually operate, instead of seeing endemic conflict in Washington in despairing terms. It would be good if our political leaders, including the President himself, and his Congressional opposition, respected this fact more than they do.

Conflict is an inescapable part of political life. We all have legitimate but divergent interests, and we always will. It is the creative insight of our Constitution that such conflict need not be invariably destructive, and can be channeled toward the common good and toward the flourishing of the individual person, both at the same time.

For conflict to be constructive, though, there has to be one point of agreement: prior acceptance by all parties of the Constitution's overarching authority. It provides the rules of the game. There can be no successful game without durable administered rules, administered with as much impartiality as human nature will allow. Sometimes it may seem disappointing that our Constitution contains so few high-flown words, being quite unlike the Declaration of Independence in that regard. But it has spoken best through the structures

it has established. When push has come to shove, it has functioned remarkably well as the umpire of last appeal in our most contentious public debates. Even the coming of a horrific Civil War did not cause us to lose its beneficial effects for good. Its authority remains indispensable. It deserves to be venerated... and to be better understood.

Don Kagan, a long time professor of Classics at Yale University and at one time Chairman of the Faculty at Yale, spoke last year at Hotchkiss School and discussed the need for citizens to receive what he calls a "patriotic education" – a notion promoted by Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson was convinced that there needed to be an education for all citizens if they and their new kind of popular government were to flourish. He understood that schools must provide "to every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business; to enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts, and accounts, in writing."

For Jefferson, though, the most important goals of education were civic and moral. In his "Preamble to the 1779 Virginia Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" he addresses the need for all students to have a political education through the study of the "forms of government," political history and foreign affairs. This was not meant to be a "value free" exercise; on the contrary, its purpose was to communicate the special virtues of republican representative democracy, the dangers that threatened it, and the responsibility of its citizens to esteem and protect it. This education was to be a common experience for all citizens, rich and poor, for every one of them had natural rights and powers, and every one had to understand and esteem the institutions, laws and traditions of his country if it was to succeed.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Kagan was correct. We need to understand these principles.

I am thrilled that at the University of Oklahoma (OU) where I teach, the U.S. Constitution is held in high regard. Under the inspired leadership of President David Boren and Provost Kyle Harper, OU formed the Institute for the American Constitutional Heritage (IACH). The motto of OU is *civis et reipublicae*: for the citizen and for

the country, a constant reminder that citizenship training is an integral part of higher education's mission and its justification. The IACH at OU follows through on that responsibility, offering a unique undergraduate curriculum called "Constitutional Studies," which can be pursued as a free-standing minor or a concentration within the Letters major.

The IACH sponsors a broad range of programming free and open to the public, like our annual Teach-In, in which some of the nation's finest historians address overflow audiences with compelling accounts of key moments in the American past. In addition, the outreach mission of the IACH brings the talents and resources of its faculty to the broader community, and in turn the community enriches the conversations hosted by the IACH. Freedom.ou.edu is such a program, dedicated to promoting civic education through short, topical, online talks related to citizenship, freedom, and the Constitution. The site also acts as a hub for lifelong learning on the web. Numerous programs are hosted, including Freedom 101: an ongoing series of short, 15-minute lectures on American constitutional law and constitutional history.

In addition, IACH sponsors an annual summer institute for teachers, in collaboration with the Center for the History of Liberty, which provides teachers with a week-long full-immersion course in constitutional law and history, designed to refresh and improve their own teaching.

In all these ways, we at OU are trying to carry on the mission that Thomas Jefferson assigned us at our beginnings as a free nation. We welcome others who wish to join us in that noble work.

.....  
*Wilfred McClay holds the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, and is one of the founding board members of the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America's Founding Principles and History.*

<sup>3</sup><http://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-kagan-democracy-requires-a-patriotic-education-1411770193>



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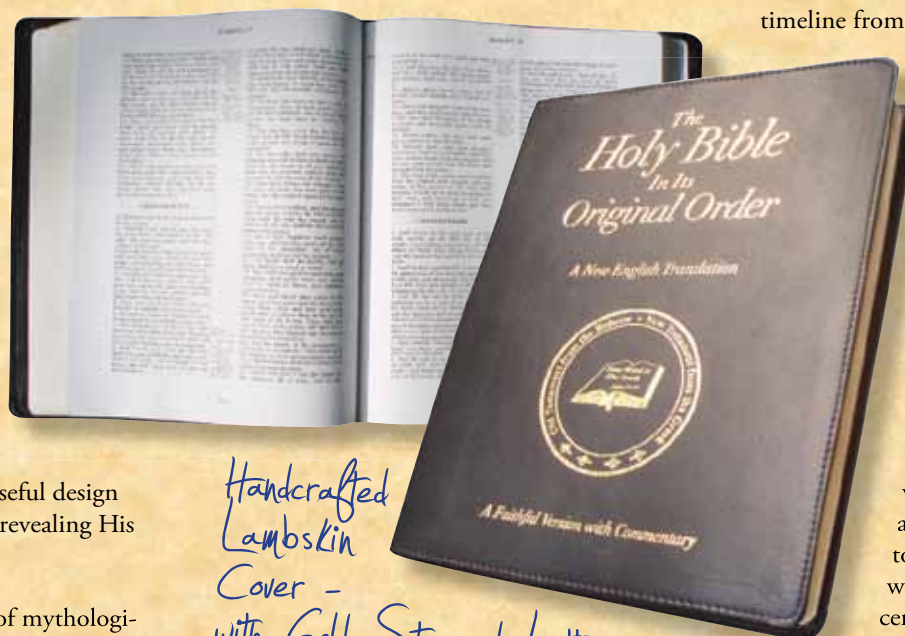
- 4) The Gospels and Acts
- 5) The General Epistles
- 6) The Epistles of Paul
- 7) The Book of Revelation

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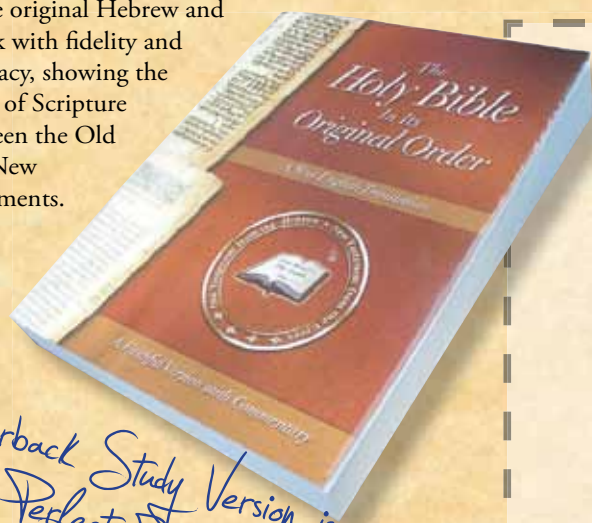
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# The Constitution: Igniting a passion for liberty through classroom engagement

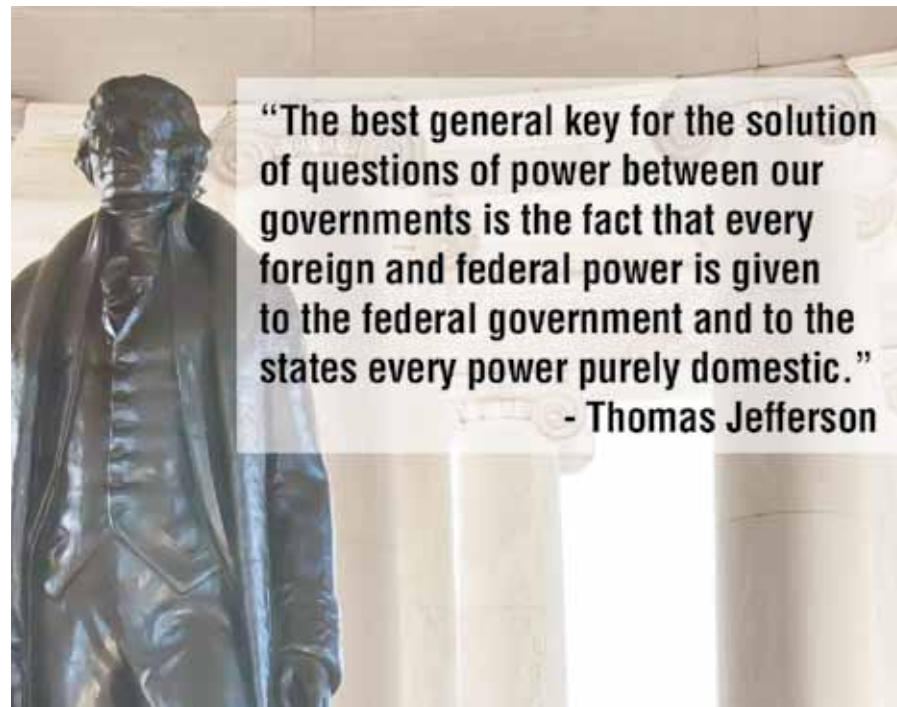
By Whitney Neal

While initially penned on parchment paper, the Constitution transcends time and technology to remain one of the most influential and inspirational documents in the history of the world. Issues debated in Philadelphia by the Founders are still argued in the halls of Congress with a vigor and passion that rivals that of Madison and Jefferson. The Constitution is more than a word tossed around during debates or campaign speeches—it is the foundation of our republic and the fabric with which our story has been written.

Our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, so eloquently detailed in the Declaration of Independence, are protected by the very structure of the Constitution. To its core, the Constitution was written to ensure that individual liberty trumps that of government in every way possible.

In fact, it was crafted with the full knowledge that unless our citizens know—and value—these rights, government could take them away. Protections such as checks and balances, separation of powers, and the Bill of Rights, were put in place as a beacon of acknowledgement that individual liberty is the building block of a free society.

To maintain our liberty, it is imperative that with each passing generation our classrooms are invigorated with the constitutional principles that guide this great nation. With students that aren't



just reading about the Constitution, but are actively engaging with it, applying it to issues that directly affect their lives and communities. Students need to know that we interact with it every day, from a visit to church on Sunday, to an interaction with a police officer, to reading the news, to posting a message on social media, to simply talking on the phone.

However, recent studies have shown that our students lack that basic understanding of American History and civics.

The 2014 Nation's Report Card<sup>4</sup> provides an alarming view of just how disengaged eighth-graders are with fundamental building blocks of our great nation. A mere 18 percent attained proficiency in U.S. History and 24 percent in civics.

While the Founders intended government to protect our rights, of these very same eighth grade students, fifty-one percent believe the purpose of government is to guarantee everyone a job.

What is the catalyst for this lack of

knowledge and engagement? A lack of emphasis in the classroom on more than just memorizing abstract facts. To solve this problem, we must begin with hands-on application of the Constitution.

We have, within our grasp, solutions to this crisis. This Constitution Day, the Bill of Rights Institute is once again providing educators with engaging primary source-based lessons, discussions, and activities to use in the classroom. Designed to draw connections between complex topics facing society, such as racial tensions in Ferguson or debates over immigration reform, religious liberty, and free speech, and the Constitution, these resources are free of charge and open to parents, students, teachers, administrators, and any individual that seeks to improve their civic knowledge.

The Constitution is a beautiful beacon of what is possible when power is derived from the people—and the people recognize that governments' purpose is to protect our individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

What does the Constitution mean to you? Share your thoughts on Twitter at #BRIChat.

Whitney Neal is the Director of Marketing at the Bill of Rights Institute. For more information, visit [www.billofrightsinstitute.org](http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org).

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/)

## Inspiring young people with the Constitution

By Melinda Cooperman

Six eleventh graders bang their fists on the desks in unison setting up the background beat for what's to come. "Nisa on the beat...it's Molly from the streets." The first two chant. "Molly" starts rapping—"I was just takin' my prescription. I don't see why everybody having a conniption. Chill Lewis, stop tripping. I tried to explain. It didn't work. I fought and they took me to me to Court. They haven't decided yet but I hope it's in my favor. I apologize for my allegedly suspicious behavior but I have my rights intact. In fact, that's a violation of the direct Fourth Amendment...this discussion should have been ended." Who's Molly? Molly is possibly the name of the petitioner in the 2015 Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project moot court problem, or the name of a street drug that's led to a number of recent overdoses in Capital City, Old Columbia, our fictional moot court jurisdiction. Either way—the students are engaging with the text of the Fourth Amendment—and that



Marshall-Brennan  
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University of New Mexico School of Law

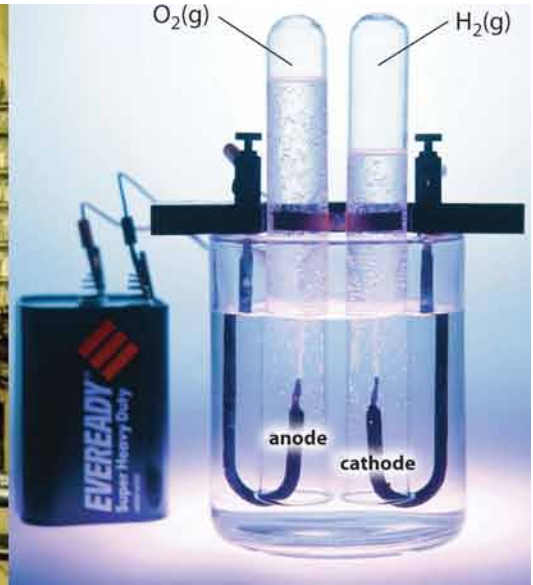
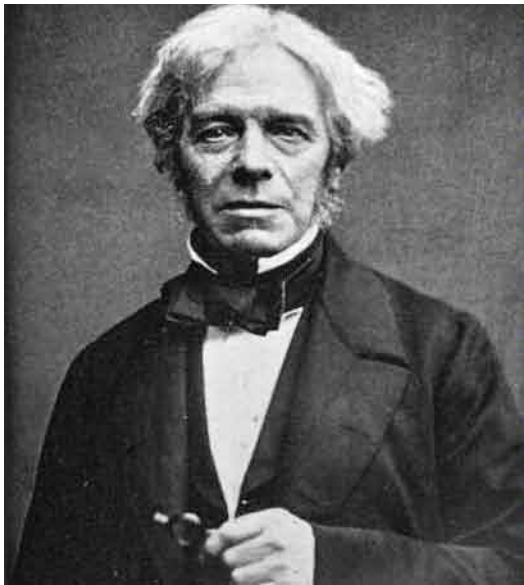
is what matters most to us.

At the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project ("Project") we inspire high school students to care about important constitutional issues and we connect the issues that students care about to the Constitution. The Project was started in 1999 by Professor Jamie Raskin to address the well-documented constitutional illiteracy and civic disengagement of America's high school students by mobilizing the idealism and energy of law students. We are a part of a powerful movement that seeks to reframe the issues present in the daily lives of youth as constitutional issues that must not be ignored if we want to have an active, questioning, democratic citizenry.

The Project began with 25 upper-level law students, designated Marshall-Brennan Fellows ("Fellows") in honor of the late United States Supreme Court Justices Thurgood Marshall and William J.

» see **YOUNG** | D12





## HOW MANY MIRACLES DO YOU NEED TO BECOME A BELIEVER WHEN YOU ARE TOLD THEY ARE SCIENTIFICALLY IMPOSSIBLE?

*Miracles are always a work in progress that begin with one step. In the 19th century the quest for the purest water began with Michael Faraday's First and Second Laws of Electrolysis. But hypothesizing a law mathematically is not the same as actually achieving the results. Stepping into Faraday's shoes some 40 years ago was Electrical Engineer John Ellis who succeeded in doing what no inventor has done before or since—he perfected the distillation and purification of water—altering the bond angle of the hydrogen in the water from 104° to 114° creating what a Washington Post writer referred to in 1992 as “light water” and what most simply call “miracle water.”*

I started a scientific controversy when I finally changed the properties of ordinary water into “MIRACLE WATER” by increasing the Hydrogen Bond Angle in ordinary water from 104° to a measurable 114° and maintained it! However, text books will tell you this is “IMPOSSIBLE” because like any substance, as a result of that change it's not water anymore, it's something else but if you are a believer you know with God anything is possible!! Scientists have said for years that if anyone could do that it would “Cure Anything” and at 85, after being in this family business for 40 years, we have thousands of reports that it HAS!! Even during the development stage, as far back as 1/27/92 a Washington Post Investigative article (on my website) noted 10,000 people/day travelling to obtain my water! Do

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I want everyone to use my water? The short answer is NO because Bill Gates and many others have said we have to depopulate the planet down to 500 million (only those people that believe in God's miracles will survive)!

HERE'S PROOF why they say it's “impossible”: Jon Spokes at The Washington Times received a phone call from the top scientist at the Los Alamos Nuclear Lab with so many degrees after his

name he needed a fold out calling card: “You have a scam artist advertising the impossible in your newspaper!!” which was followed by scientists from Lawrence Livermore and the Fort Detrick Biological and Cancer Institute. Jon Spokes monitors advertisers for honesty to maintain the good name of the newspaper! Accordingly, he told him: “Call John and if you decide he's a scam artist, he will never advertise in this newspaper again!” After calling me and buying our E5 machine, he laughingly told Jon: “I am embarrassed to say John HAS CHANGED THE HYDROGEN BOND ANGLE in water and I wish I owned his patents!” Since that time we have sold 100's of machines to these scientists that include Lawrence Livermore and Brookhaven Labs when a nuclear reactor contaminated an aquifer. With an Engineering Degree that includes Steam Plant Design, God proved with his infinite wisdom that I was right and the textbooks were WRONG!

After the above article, G. Abraham MD did independent Blood Flow studies at UCLA Medical School since blood is 94% water: “You can't argue with something you can measure. Nothing is even close to your water in getting blood to the extremities!” However, charlatans have bought my machines and used my “Miracle Water” on religious TV and since we can measure the 114° HBA we can see if it's our misbranded water! In some cases, it tests out as tap water!! Also, BOTH ordinary distilled (101° HBA) and ordinary water (104° HBA) have ZERO ENERGY!! Our 114° HBA water has 3000% MORE ENERGY and we can measure that also (website Ammeter Video adding ONLY 20 DROPS to ordinary water)! 94 year old Gilbert de Daunant (Prince Rainier's cousin), after shipping a machine to an MD in Africa: “Your water is working against EBOLA both in and out of the hospitals!” Since this energy boosts the immune system, we want to reach as many people as possible as a humanitarian effort. Accordingly, I am putting my properties into a nonprofit and using TV for further outreach. Our gorgeous 418 acre mountain property overlooking the Delaware River is perfect to evangelize this discovery! With its one of a kind Gatehouse and Pavilion including miles of roads with estate lighting and underground utilities to protect the visual beauty, this is a unique setting for visitors. We hope you will join us! 13 Patents 332 FDA Tests. Johnellis.com/measure • Written by John Ellis

**Gilbert de Daunant (Prince Rainier's cousin): “I just walked 40 blocks and I am 94! Send another E5 to Monaco!”**

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# YOUNG

From page D10

Brennan, Jr., and, with the support of their widows, Mrs. Cecilia Marshall and the late Mrs. Mary Brennan. During the 2014-2015 academic year 36 students taught 15 classes in 10 different public high schools in Washington, D.C. and Prince George's County, MD. Across the country, hundreds of other Fellows, representing the 18 other law schools that have formed Marshall-Brennan chapters, joined us in this work.

The key to success in the Project lies in the relationships formed between the high school students and the law

students as they grapple with the question of how to teach their students what the law says, when the law's *meaning* may feel very different to some of their students based on their life experiences outside the classroom. The close-knit relationships formed between the law students and high school students as they face these questions together are reciprocal in nature, providing a deep understanding about our society for both high school students and law students—an understanding that will shape their perspectives as active citizens and advocates for justice.

On day one we tell the Fellows to have fun with the law. We give them permission to leave the box of law school

thinking and get creative in designing their lesson plans. It's not only us—the Project is part of a law-related civic education movement whereby members of the legal community are investing time working with high school students across the country to ensure that this generation of students grows to become an action-oriented generation that has the civic knowledge necessary to make a real difference in our society.

Through educating youth about their rights, and drawing upon the spirit of activism and inspiration of justice and the rule of law, law-related civic education programs are giving students the tools they need to answer the very questions the recent events around the country are

raising. As civic educators, our Marshall-Brennan Fellows are planting the seeds of change by taking advantage of these poignant moments in time and helping their high school students connect the dots between issues they care about and the Constitution.

*Melinda Cooperman is adjunct professor law and Associate Director of the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project at American University Washington College of Law. For more information about the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project we welcome you to contact Melinda Cooperman at [melindac@wcl.american.edu](mailto:melindac@wcl.american.edu).*

## Teaching Citizens About the Constitution

By Kerry Sautner

We have a saying here at the National Constitution Center: we are not here to teach lawyers, we are here to teach citizens. This is our rallying cry—one we need because making a 228-year document relevant to a 21st-century audience isn't easy. Now, after years of planning, we have found a way to take this 18th-century document into every classroom in America.

On September 17th, thanks to a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, we are launching the NEW Interactive Constitution, a free, online tool that allows students to gain a deeper understanding of what the words actually mean. The Interactive Constitution is produced in collaboration with the Federalist Society and the American Constitution Society, the leading conservative and liberal lawyers groups in America. Thanks to this collaboration, the top liberal and conservative scholars in America will write about every clause

of the Constitution – describing what they agree about and what they disagree about. The Interactive Constitution is a site where constitutional experts interact with each other to explore the Constitution's history and what it means today. For each provision of the Constitution, scholars of different perspectives discuss what they agree upon, and what they disagree about. These experts were selected with the guidance of leading constitutional law organizations—The American Constitution Society and The Federalist Society.

The Interactive Constitution will be available free to anyone, anywhere and anytime. It will be distributed in partnership with the College Board as a teaching tool in the new AP history and government curriculum, and it will be available to students of all ages across America and around the world. I'm especially excited because, as an educator, I know that the best learners are active learners. To learn and master a topic, the learners

must enjoy what they are studying and feel in control of their learning. This is exactly with the Interactive Constitution provides.

So, now that we've brought the Constitution into the 21st century, here's the other key tactic for explaining and building understanding of the Constitution: storytelling. And the U.S. Constitution is full of stories. Take the Fourth Amendment as an example. It reads:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated; and no Warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Where did those ideas come from? What happened to make the Founding Fathers write these words and how does this protect us today? This is where it gets interesting.

As you explore our new interactive Constitution, you will read more about what the Founding Fathers concerns were when writing and ratifying the Fourth Amendment. You will learn about a man named John Wilkes and how King George prosecuted him for his political views. You will find out that the British government's use of "general warrants" – that is, warrants that didn't particularly specify the houses to be searched or the persons or things to be seized -- created a deep mistrust in Founders of government's unchecked ability to search without cause. These stories give today's citizens a sense of where these rights came from and allow us to imagine how they apply today, in our high-tech cyber world.

*Kerry Sautner is Vice President of Visitor Experiences and Education at The National Constitution Center. For more information, please see <http://constitutioncenter.org/>.*

## We the People educational program fulfills the Founders' aspirations

By Charles N. Quigley

In order for us to preserve our system of ordered liberty, American society must rely on the knowledge, skills, and virtue of its citizens and those we elect to public office. That is what prompted Thomas Jefferson to proclaim, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

In 1987, during the celebration of the nation's bicentennial, an education program was developed called "We the People:

The Citizen and the Constitution" that responded to Jefferson's concern about the need for an enlightened citizenry. We the People is an innovative curricular and professional development program designed to involve students from a wide range of achievement levels and with varied learning styles at the upper elementary, middle, and senior high school levels in an intensive study of the principles and history of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. More than 30 million students have participated since the program began in 1987.

The foundation of We the People is the classroom curriculum, which not only enhances students' understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy, but also helps them to identify the contemporary relevance of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Critical-thinking exercises, problem-solving activities, and cooperative-learning techniques develop participatory skills and dispositions necessary for students to become active, responsible citizens.

The program's culminating activity is a simulated congressional hearing wherein

students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge by evaluating, taking, and defending positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues. The hearings, whether competitive or noncompetitive, provide the classroom teacher with a powerful means of motivating and assessing student performance. They also provide community members the opportunity to participate as judges and volunteers for the student hearings. See [www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org).

» see PEOPLE | D13



# PEOPLE

From page D12

Each year, state champion high school classes compete at the We the People National Finals in Washington, D.C. On the last day the top-ten classes testify in congressional hearing rooms on Capitol Hill. The late journalist David Broder attended this event and wrote in his nationally syndicated column that the annual competition was “the place to come to have your faith in the younger generation restored.”

People from an array of professions serve as judges at local, state, and national competitions, posing questions to the students on important constitutional issues and adding the perspective and knowledge of their experience. Some of these community members include judicial officials. A justice on the Hawaii Supreme Court described the program, “The We the People program is without peer. I’ve personally heard brilliance and wisdom coming from the mouths of high school students that wouldn’t have emerged but for the program.”

We the People has been the subject of more than 20 studies that show its success in producing positive outcomes. Recent research by Professor Diana Owen of Georgetown University has found the We the People teacher institutes and curriculum to be remarkably effective. Students who take a We the People class not only know more about their constitutional heritage and contemporary applications, but are more likely to believe that it is their responsibility to be involved in their community than students who take traditional civics classes.

Perhaps the most telling assessments of the program come from former students. In the words of an attorney from the California Department of Justice:

*“We the People changed my life. It’s as*



*simple as that. Any and all academic, personal, or professional success I’ve enjoyed can, in some way, be traced to my participation in the program as a high school student 16 years ago. We the People taught me more than any other class I’ve taken—in high school, college, or law school. It taught me how to learn, how to think, how to work on*

*a team, how to be a friend, how to speak in public, how to listen, how to write, how to take constructive criticism, how to give it, how to believe in myself, and how to rely on others. We the People taught me that citizens—of all ages, from anywhere—can shape national policy. We the People taught me to believe in this country.*

While many institutions such as the family, the church, and social organizations help forge a person’s civic character and propensity to participate, civic education in the schools is the one common experience American citizens share that helps them acquire and learn to use the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them to be competent and responsible contributors to our civic life. Using a proven program like We the People, the schools can help fulfill the Founders’ aspirations and preserve our constitutional legacy by giving our youth the intellectually rich and engaged education they need to participate fully in their own governance and help to make our nation one that truly is ‘of, by, and for the people.’

.....  
Charles Quigley is Executive Director of The Center for Civic Education. For more information, please visit [www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org).

## Renewing the American mind

**By Matt Spalding**

The United States is exceptional not because of what it has achieved—independence, power, wealth, or status—but for what it stands for: liberty, equal rights, popular consent, the rule of law, constitutional self-government. To transmit this knowledge from one generation of citizens to the next is the most important requisite for American democracy.

At Hillsdale College, we teach that American politics should be understood in light of the country’s founding principles, study these principles as they were understood by America’s founders and explore the relationship of these principles to the Constitution and their fate in the development of modern America. We are one of the only colleges in the country that requires each and every student to take a semester course on the United States

Constitution as part of its core curriculum. We believe that understanding the principles and workings of liberty is a necessary component of a liberal education.

But this education must not be confined to the classroom. We must teach the principles of liberty and the rights and responsibilities of self-government to all Americans—“to refine and enlarge the public views,” as Madison put it—not as a matter of historical curiosity but as a source of permanent truth in a world of moral confusion.

As an extension of its teaching mission, Hillsdale College offers not-for-credit online courses taught by Hillsdale faculty on a range of subjects—from Western Heritage to Economics to Great Books. With over one million enrollments, the cornerstone of these seminars is “Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution,” based on the college’s

core undergraduate course that covers the origins, formation, and history of the Constitution through its greatest trials. We have recently added a course that guides our online students through The Federalist Papers’ explication of the Constitution. All this, and the primary source Constitution Reader used by our students, is available for free at [online.hillsdale.edu](http://online.hillsdale.edu).

Rather than throwing up our hands and withdrawing from the public debate, we need to engage it in new ways. That is why Hillsdale College founded the Allan P. Kirby Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship in Washington, DC: to teach our national leaders about the foundational principles and constitutional wisdom that are the roots of our country’s greatness, about applying America’s core principles creatively to the questions of the day, and generally reframing the national debate about the most serious issues

before us.

Most Americans still believe in the uniqueness of this country and respect its noble ideas. They have not given up on their country’s experiment in self-government, and have not concluded that the cause of liberty and limited constitutional government is lost. Jefferson called the Declaration of Independence “an expression of the American mind.” Our aim must be a clear expression and forthright defense of America’s principles in the classroom and the public square so that they become, once again, an expression of the American mind. As it has been for most of American history, so it can be again.

.....  
Matthew Spalding is Associate Vice President and Dean of Educational Programs for Hillsdale College in Washington, DC.



# The U.S. Constitution: A fertile ground for students and teachers

by **Christian Garcia**

Educators throughout the country have long understood the value of teaching about the United States Constitution. State education leaders have enhanced the significance of that instruction by giving it a prominent place in the key documents that guide teachers in public schools—learning standards.

Learning standards define the knowledge and skills of educational objectives—what students should know and be expected to do at specific levels of education (grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) or after completing a course (for example, U.S. government, biology, calculus, French II, or World Literature). Every five years or so standards go through a public process of research, development, writing, public comment, and state approval. It is useful to know what standards are not. Standards do not describe teaching practices or assessments. Standards are part of (but do not entirely encompass) a curriculum, which also includes the lessons teachers teach, their assignments, and the materials used by both teachers and students.

State standards documents often organize Social Studies content into four strands—history, geography, economics, and civics/government. The latter category focuses upon the functions and purposes of local, state, and federal government. That strand also emphasizes what it means to be a citizen of the United

States. The centerpiece of U.S. citizenship is the United States Constitution. The U.S. Constitution defines citizenship. It gives citizens an understanding of their responsibilities. Most importantly, the U.S. Constitution codifies the rights of citizens and guarantees their freedoms.

Well-written state standards do not limit the study of the U.S. Constitution to the civics/government strand.

The history strand includes standards that explain how the U.S. Constitution came to be: the setting of early nationhood and the move to replace the Articles of Confederation with a plan of government that would enable the new country to respond more effectively to the problems it faced. The history strand also includes standards about the influential documents that came before the U.S. Constitution, such as the Declaration of Independence and the English Bill of Rights.

Other history standards cover the leaders of various factions within the Constitutional Convention and their stands on key issues, as well as the ratification process, the role of the Federalist Papers in that ratification, the Bill of Rights, the interpretation of the U.S. Constitution by leaders within the three branches of government, influential cases of the U.S. Supreme Court, and the U.S. Constitution's pervasive influence throughout U.S. history.

Well-written state standards documents also include standards on the U.S.

Constitution within the economics strand. These standards lay out the U.S. Constitution's role in describing the powers of constituent branches of government in the areas of taxation, trade, and interstate commerce. The standards also define how the U.S. Constitution allows for free markets and sets forth principles of freedom that primed the U.S. economic engine for worldwide leadership.

State Social Studies standards that are outside the realm of U.S. History and Government courses also provide opportunities for students to study the U.S. Constitution. These standards offer the opportunity for comparative studies of the U.S. Constitution:

- in World History courses that delve into the development of ancient codes of law;
- in European History courses that trace the revolutionary fervor of France and the writing of the Declaration of the Rights of Man;
- in African history courses that follow the independence movements on the continent;
- in political science courses that outline the advance of socialism and communism in Eastern Europe and Asia.

Even cross-curricular standards—that are seemingly beyond the purview of students of the U.S. Constitution—provide ways to investigate the document. English Language Arts state standards and those within the controversial Common Core

State Standards Initiative call for the reading of informational (non-literary) text. These standards describe ways for students to analyze text, cite textual evidence, determine the meaning of words and phrases, and integrate knowledge and ideas. The U.S. Constitution would be fertile ground for that kind of study.

Similarly, students can employ writing standards that include the writing of arguments and the writing of informative/explanatory texts. What better subject matter to meet those standards than the U.S. Constitution?

Therefore, the flexibility of teaching the U.S. Constitution even extends to the standards that guide instruction in English and Literature classes. The variety of standards that align instruction with the content of the U.S. Constitution demonstrates that teachers can utilize numerous approaches to teaching the document—all to the betterment of their students who gain knowledge and understanding of our founding document.

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*Christian Garcia is President of Garcia Publishing Company, Inc. Also, he is currently serving as editor of the Freedom in America Series and social studies content specialist for Essentials in Education, a provider of quality educational products. For more information, please see [www.constitutioncurriculum.org](http://www.constitutioncurriculum.org).*

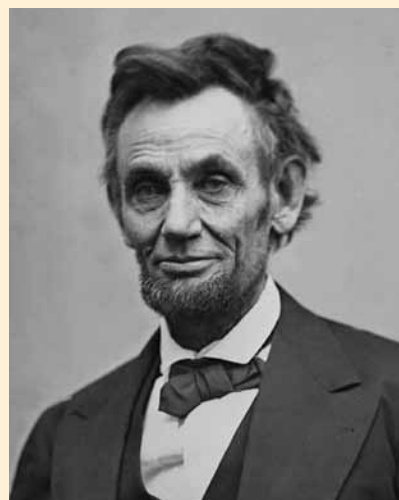
## The power of principles

By **Jeff Hymas**

Words have power. Ideas stir the soul, but until ideas are embodied with *words* they are only dreams that fade away when the bright sun of reality dawns. What the brave men and women of 1776 did was face the sun and boldly declare what they knew to be true, knowing that the probability of such ideas surviving was – at best – a dream.

Though true and revolutionary for its time, the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence were not new: that man is born equally free; that man's freedom comes from his Creator – not from other men; that government is man's servant, not his master. These were ideals that many men had dreamt of before. What made the Declaration unique was that men wrote down such ideas in public defiance of those in power, knowing full well that taking such a stand could cost them their lives.

Such words and such stands on principle eventually birthed a nation whose



**Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth.**

**- Abraham Lincoln**

conception was unique in all of history because, as Lincoln's immortal words declared, it was born, "of the people, by

the people, [and] for the people".

But, even after victory in the war for independence proved that such ideas

were not just theoretical, these ideals – these principles of freedom – were dying on the vine. There was no doubt that they were true and that they were powerful and that they stood nobly on their own – *but* did they stand on their own? They had no structure to bear them up and no place they could call home – that is, until the summer of 1787 when 55 wise and humble men acknowledged that being right on principle wasn't enough for their fledgling country. What they recognized was their country also needed to be right about the pragmatic institutionalization of those principles – principles which appeared to defy institutionalization.

So, they set off to build such a structure. And, to their credit and to our great blessing, when the foundation for such a structure – though firm – appeared too small and too restrictive they resisted the urge to build out and to build up because such expansion resembled too much that of a castle built for a king; and theirs was



# POWER

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a quest to build a nation of self-rulers free from governmental intrusion on his life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.

I am inspired by the Constitution because it rescued a dream that was fading away into the annals of history and breathed life into it again, making it a multi-century reality for millions of dreamers like me.

I am inspired by the Constitution because it took on, and continues to take on, the seemingly impossible balancing act of governing over men without overgoverning them.

I am inspired by the Constitution because it took the Declaration's lofty ideal of delegated, limited power enshrined in

the words, "deriv[ing] their just powers from the consent of the governed," and inscribed it into the 18 clauses of its 1st article and 8th section.

I am inspired by the Constitution's Article I, Section 10, wherein it ensures that men's "pursuit of happiness" will not be inhibited, nor aided, by government.

I am inspired by the Constitution's 5th amendment which brings to life the proclamation, "that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men" with its guarantee of the protection of life, liberty, and property.

In short, I am inspired by the beautiful marriage of lofty principles and sound structure found in our Constitution. I raise my voice in support of and in deep appreciation for this great document that serves as the supreme law of our land, and I join with William Gladstone who

called it, "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

It is with this backdrop of deep respect for the principles of freedom found in our Constitution that the national *Constitution Bee* is being launched. For, as the founders so wisely understood, regardless of how powerful these principles are, if they don't find a home they will die. And, what better home – what better receptacle for such principles – than in the hearts and minds of America's most valuable asset – its rising generation!

The *Constitution Bee* is on a mission to teach youth the powerful truths embodied in that great document in ways that make it exciting, applicable, and absolutely critical to our present-day happiness and well-being. So, that when the inevitable – and quickly approaching

– day arrives when the monumental question is asked of our nation's youth, as it was asked of our nation's founders, "Who will take a stand for the principles of freedom?" our youth will be armed with the knowledge and with the courage to boldly declare, "We, too, hold these truths!"

.....  
*Jeff Hymas is the founder of "In the Constitution," a non-profit whose mission is to educate Americans on the principles of freedom found in the Constitution. Jeff has presented his youth and adult series to over 400 live audiences. His most recent project, the "Constitution Bee", is gaining national acclaim for its unique approach to teaching youth the "why" behind the freedom formula of our founding document.*

## What inspires me about the Constitution

By Tim Donner

As a naive young boy seeking my own happiness, it was second nature for me to believe that most people were the same way. I believed that attaining personal happiness was more than enough of a challenge for people, without adding other people into the mix. I thought that this was the natural state of affairs.

Thus, the growing realization that this world is full of people who seek to control others was disconcerting at best. But this, I concluded reluctantly, was inherent in human nature.

As a child, I also understood that a small candy bar given to me was cooler than a larger one I had to earn. I have learned that human nature is such that people generally default to whatever requires the least effort, the path of least resistance.

This, I came to understand, means that most people will submit to control in return for the free candy bar—unless there are incentives to seek the larger candy bar.

This immutable human nature, common to all civilizations from all times, can never be conquered, but it can be tamed. Just as in medicine, some conditions can be cured, but others can only be managed.

That is why the *principles embedded in the Constitution*, and the great men and women who fought for them, are an inspiration to me.

Because they are based on the most realistic reading of human nature ever conceived, these principles inspire me because they work. I like things that work; plans that come together; principles that work in practice.

The principles embedded in the Constitution, and stated so eloquently in the Federalist Papers, work. We know that not just because of its accounting for human nature, but because of results.

Guided by this blueprint, America rose from a colonial backwater to the greatest nation in the history of the world.

From beginning to end, the Constitution accounts for human nature by dispersing power, specifically enumerating responsibilities, and empowering the broad mass of citizens to determine their own individual fates.

Make no mistake, this was revolutionary stuff. Suddenly, in the most dramatic reversal in world history, the government would become the servant of the people instead of the other way around. And this goal would be achieved with the application of principles large enough to persist in their relevance to issues in the future that its framers could not possibly have envisioned.

Perfect it is not. Nothing is. Some framers sought to outlaw slavery before realizing it was politically impossible at the time. And if they had it to do again, they might have, for example, included term limits for Congress. They might have limited the power of the presidency more than they did.

But as Winston Churchill famously stated, democracy is the worst form of government ... except for all the others. And it's not even close.

Consider the alternatives—dictatorship or collectivism of one form or another.

It has most often taken no more than a single man with an insatiable thirst for control to destroy entire civilizations. Just two years shy of the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution that produced the Soviet state, we now have an unbroken history of tyranny and death attached to one tyrant after another, particularly the barbaric practice of communism, and powerful centralized governments that consistently discourage an ethos of productivity among its citizens.

But it is in response to this reality that my love for the Constitution developed. Human nature cannot be changed, but it can be recognized, accounted for, and mitigated for the sake of a nation. And properly applied, the founding principles mitigate this human nature, this thirst for control, more effectively than any document ever created.

A president cannot change laws, nor start a war without the consent of Congress, nor veto an act of Congress without that body having the opportunity to override. No money can be spent without a majority of the people's representatives from the entire nation approving. No law can be passed by Congress without the ultimate assent of the courts. Any power not specifically enumerated as federal rests with the states or the people. And the list of particulars on the vertical (between federal and state) and horizontal (between federal branches) division of power goes far beyond those.

But even more important are the unprecedented rights afforded to individuals. No person can be jailed for expressing an opinion. No person can be subject to unreasonable search and seizure. No accused person can be denied representation or tried twice for the same crime. And that list also goes on and on.

These remarkable checks, balances, and rights are central to the fabric of America, but how they were attained is just as remarkable.

They were championed by elites who could quite easily have seized power for themselves. The founders could have formed their own monarchy, oligarchy, or other top-down or authoritarian form of rule not dissimilar to the one against which they had successfully revolted.

Instead, they created the first bottom-up system of self-government. "We the people." Not, "we the rulers."

The founders had so much to lose personally—not the least of which were their

own lives. It would have been far easier to protect their own positions—to feather their own comfortable nests—than to place their lives in the direct line of fire by fomenting a radical movement for independence from the most powerful nation in the world.

That is why the courageous pledging of their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor in defense of an experimental system that would remove their own safety nets and limit or disperse their own power remains truly awe-inspiring to this day.

I'm inspired by the courage it took to even conceive such a thing. And for the courage it took to stare down human nature and invent the only form of government ever to successfully account for it.

And because I am so inspired by the Constitution, I have a desire to help other American citizens meaningfully connect with our nation's founding charter in the same way that I have. John Adams famously said, "Posterity, you will never know how much it cost the present Generation to preserve your Freedom. I hope you will make good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in Heaven, that I ever took half the Pains to preserve it." Let us continue to honor the courage and foresight of our nation's founders by working to ensure that "We the People" are informed and engaged. A good place to start is by joining the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign in its efforts to reinvigorate life-long civic learning.

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*Tim Donner is President of One Generation Away, an educational organization dedicated to applying America's founding principles to the issues of today. OneGen is the creator of Roots of Liberty: Unlocking the Federalist Papers, an interactive curriculum designed for high school students across the nation.*



# The Civics Education Initiative: An idea whose time has come

By Frank Riggs

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), known as the Nation's Report Card, recently released the 2014 testing results of a representative sampling of 29,000 eighth graders across the country in the subjects of history, geography, and civics. The results were disappointing, yet not surprising.

According to the NAEP test, given every four years, our nation's eighth graders have shown no significant improvement since 2010 in their knowledge of history, geography, and civics. In U.S. history, 18 percent of students scored at or above proficient, compared with 17 percent in 2010. In geography, 27 percent scored at or above proficient, compared with 24 percent in 2010. In civics, 23 percent scored at or above proficient, compared with 22 percent in 2010. We've flat-lined as a country.

Why haven't we been able to move the needle? For the last decade, the focus in our schools has been on standardized testing in the core academic subjects and on STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math). Clearly, that's critical learning. But our schools are failing to prepare young people for citizenship, the original purpose of public education.

Without a basic understanding of our government, the ideals on which our country is founded (as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights), and the sacrifices that were made to build America into the greatest nation on Earth, kids are missing out on a big part of what it means to be



American. They must know their rights and freedoms as citizens, the one thing that we all have in common and that unite us as a nation despite the many differences in our society over age, race, income, politics, and religion.

This is our future, the next generation of leaders, the people whose votes will decide the direction of this country for decades to come. We have to "teach democracy" to ensure our kids understand how self-governance works, and leave school prepared to do their part as informed, engaged citizens.

In a democratic republic, civics isn't optional.

That's why I'm so passionate about

closing the civics education gap and preparing America's youth for civic engagement. Imagine a world where injustices are met with civic engagement instead of violence. The adage "The pen is mightier than the sword" has never been more important than it is today. The classroom is the place where tomorrow's leaders must learn how our system of government was created, and more importantly, how it provides them with the tools and opportunities to express their viewpoints and work toward meaningful change.

In January, Arizona became the first state in the nation to pass legislation that requires high school students to pass the U.S. Citizenship Civics Test in order to

graduate and receive a diploma, starting with the class of 2017. Students will first be able to take the test in 8th grade, and will have opportunities to pass the test all the way up until graduation from the 12th grade. This is ample time to learn the same basic knowledge about our country's history and government that must be mastered by legal immigrants who pass the naturalization test to become U.S. citizens.

Since Arizona passed this requirement, it has been joined by eight other states. North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Idaho, Tennessee, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Wisconsin have all shown their commitment to a renewed focus on civics education as a staple of the curriculum. Many more states are or will soon be considering this legislation as educators, policymakers, and concerned citizens become increasingly aware of our national civics education deficit.

Through the Joe Foss Institute's Civics Education Initiative, we hope to have this requirement adopted by all 50 states by September 17, 2017—making it the "a law of the land" by the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.

Let's make the Civics Education Initiative goal of creating a basic standard and baseline measurement for the teaching and learning of civics in America's 30,000-plus high schools a national priority. The future of our Republic depends on it.

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*Frank Riggs, President and CEO of the Joe Foss Institute of Scottsdale, AZ, is a former three-term U.S. Congressman from Northern California.*

## NINE DOWN ★ FORTY-ONE TO GO!

The Joe Foss Institute created and launched the Civics Education Initiative in 2014, with a goal of passing legislation in all 50 states by the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution on September 17, 2017



*Congratulations*

- ★ Arizona
- ★ North Dakota
- ★ South Dakota
- ★ Utah
- ★ Idaho
- ★ Tennessee
- ★ South Carolina
- ★ Louisiana
- ★ Wisconsin

*We the People*



# Fixing teacher education key to civic literacy

By Roger Beckett

America has a crisis in history and civic education. As previous articles in this special section have detailed, the evidence abounds.

What are the causes of this crisis? Certainly boring and biased textbooks. Fewer classroom hours dedicated to American history and civics is also a problem. While we should not necessarily look to the federal government for the solution to this problem, federal funding for civic and history teacher education programs has been almost eliminated in the past few years. As a nation, we focus on literacy, math, and science to stay innovative and create jobs. But we have largely forgotten that we must also develop educated citizens – citizens capable of preserving this experiment in self-government.

Another cause is that university education schools over-emphasize coursework on how to teach and spend too much time creating teacher-researchers. This has been done at the expense of courses in the content area, and it has created a couple generations of teachers with a limited background in American history and government. Although universities require students preparing to teach American history and government to take courses in these subject areas, these programs do not create teachers who are masters of the depth and breadth of American history

and civics.

The best teachers I ever met knew their subject well and they loved it. This was obvious in their classes. So how do we create teachers like this?

From 2006 to 2011, the US Department of Education offered grants for Presidential Academies in American History and Civics. Senators Lamar Alexander and Roger Wicker created the programs to “offer workshops for both veteran and new teachers of American history and civics to strengthen their knowledge and preparation for teaching these subjects.” Ashbrook won one of two competitive grants to run these Presidential Academies.

Ashbrook’s Presidential Academy took 50 teachers, one from each state, on a three-week seminar to Philadelphia, Gettysburg, and Washington, DC each year. It included an extensive evaluation conducted by an independent evaluation firm. This was one of the most extensive evaluations of a program of this type. It evaluated the effects of the program on teachers – both what they learned and how they applied it in their classrooms. It was a blind study, with the alternates to the program who did not participate also included in the evaluation. Most importantly, it provided data on the effects on their students, a rare component of these evaluations because of its cost.

The results were impressive. On average, students of Academy teachers

increased their history test scores on eras and events from a failing score of 62% to a score of 72%. AP student scores increased by 12%.

Ninety-three percent (93%) of Academy teachers “significantly” increased their use of primary sources in the classroom and all of the Academy participants currently use primary sources in class, 85% at least weekly, and 98% at least monthly. Teacher daily textbook use among 2011 participants dropped nearly three fold. (There are many other results, and the full evaluation report is available online at <http://tah.org/pa>.)

Why was the program successful? Rather than teaching through textbooks or teaching about pedagogy, this Academy, like all of Ashbrook’s programs for teachers, directs them to primary-source documents and engages them through conversations about these documents to deepen the teacher’s knowledge of American history and constitutional principles. No sage on the stage, Ashbrook faculty offers teachers the opportunity to engage directly with the great ideas and people who have shaped the American mind. We engage with our teachers as equals with us in devotion to the truth and to understanding the documents we study as their authors understood them.

At Ashbrook we talk with teachers, rather than at them, because that is how free and equal individuals converse with

one another. Our manner implies, in brief, that our classrooms are small republics.

Our manner encourages everyone involved to raise their expectations of themselves, making themselves better students, teachers, and citizens than they would otherwise be. At its best, an American history and government class strengthens the American republic by inculcating the manners, understanding, and inclinations self-governing citizens require. This is how we help teachers to prepare their students to understand what it means to be an American.

As we reconsider the role of history and civics education, there is much at stake. After the American founders established their experiment in self-government, many of them turned to creating schools. They knew that creating an educated citizenry would be key to the success of their experiment. These evaluation results show that the kind of education provided by Ashbrook and other organizations that are a part of the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign actually moves the needle on what happens with student learning.

As we work to improve our schools to build a stronger and smarter American workforce, we also need to set aside a little more time and energy to creating a stronger and smarter citizenry.

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Roger Beckett is Executive Director of the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University.

## Foundations can help ignite passionate citizenship

By George Nethercutt

How did America as a fledgling nation 239 years ago grow into a superpower standing for human freedom across the globe? This is a question that inspires me and motivates me as a citizen to make sure that young people in particular know the answer to that question. If such principles are to last, they must first be understood. And that’s why civic learning is so necessary.

As a Chairman of my own nonprofit foundation, I decided to incentivize students to do better in civics. As a former Member of Congress, I am all too aware that the American Story is not known by a majority of Americans, particularly students. When Newsweek Magazine had 1000 Americans take the immigrant citizenship test, too many flunked it. When ten American University students were interviewed asking them to name one U.S. Senator, only one of ten could, but all ten knew the name of the theme song from the movie “Frozen.” We chuckle at popular television programs that show the ignorance of ordinary Americans about basic U.S. history, government,



economics, and foreign policy; but such ignorance is detrimental to our national spirit.

To inspire young people to be better citizens and to understand the answer

to the question above, my nonprofit Foundation (see [www.nethercuttfoundation.org](http://www.nethercuttfoundation.org)) hosted a regional Citizenship Tournament, offering scholarships and other valuable prizes for 4th, 8th and 12th

grade students who competed at their grade level against their peers, testing their civic knowledge. Supported by the

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local Teachers' Union, Better Business Bureau, Boy Scouts, and many private businesses and individuals, hundreds of students participated in the Tournament as it effectively mixed civic knowledge with community service tasks. Winning students, with teachers and parents, were awarded scholarships, electronics prizes and educational travel to observe federal, state and municipal governments and leaders at work.

The Foundation received some 550 applications from more than 40 schools and awarded \$25,000 in scholarships, prizes, and civic-related travel. The goal was to give area school children a chance to learn about our history and government as well as engaging in their community by completing the citizen tasks in the tournament process.

We've also produced a popular television series, "U.S. History by the Minute," a series of 60-second videos that focus on an important message about Founding principles and U.S. history. My book, *In Tune with America: Our History in*

Song, combines essential U.S. history that all Americans should know, with the music of American history. A new Civics/Citizenship web app, announced at the Illinois Boys State conference, contains valuable civic learning information that will make passage of the immigrant citizenship test easier and be essential for anyone seeking public office.

Civic learning enhances American society by connecting America's past, and the lessons to be learned from it, with America's future, as young people today become the leaders of tomorrow. If they understand how America developed from a new nation in 1776 to where we are today and the principles that have been fought and died for—justice, human rights, rule of law, equality, capitalism, and free market economics—leaders of all political parties can better craft the values and principles necessary to support the United States in the future in a complicated world. Families that possess civic knowledge and regularly discuss current events and civic principles are better citizens—they volunteer more to improve their communities, they vote more often, and they are more engaged citizens in our nation's life. As leaders,

they're better equipped to advocate for a strong America and embrace concepts that lead to improvement of the American spirit—for all.

Civic learning is nonpartisan. Organizations as diverse as Opportunity Nation, seeking better economic opportunity for all Americans, to the nonprofit Joe Foss Institute that places special emphasis on veteran outreach in teaching vital American principles, to former Justice O'Connor's nonprofit iCivics acting as a valuable resource for students and teachers, to the Gallup organization, stressing core values and learning strengths—all support the idea that learning American values strengthens our nation. Famous actor Richard Dreyfuss and prominent author/historian David McCullough support better civic learning. Girls and Boys State organizations emphasize good citizenship and quality leadership skills in their participants. Scouting has Merit Badges that focus on citizenship.

As Constitution Day approaches, and Americans appreciate that the U.S. Constitution is the longest-surviving written national constitution in history, let us focus equally on more Americans learning and respecting the American

story—valuing the sacrifices of our forefathers who stood strong so that future generations could be free—understanding the principles of government that have helped America prosper, and that what we do today can make us freer, as a nation and as a people.

I would like to challenge other donors to replicate what our foundation has done and give incentive to more young people across the country. I also invite donors to join with me in the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign.

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*George R. Nethercutt, Jr. is a former U.S. Congressman who represented the 5th Congressional District of Washington from 1995-2005. In 1996, George Nethercutt formed the nonprofit, independent George Nethercutt Foundation (initially the STAR Program--Students Taking Action and Responsibility), providing students with dedicated academic instruction about American history and leadership, including an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to meet public officials, lobbyists and members of the national press, followed by students dedicating 60 hours of volunteer time at home.*

## Establishing bipartisan dialogue on the university campus

*What the James Madison program has done over fifteen years*

By Luis Tellez

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institution at Princeton University, a program that in the words of its founder, Prof. Robert George, "celebrates the founding principles that have made America great."

By all accounts the Madison program is thriving. But the United States is not thriving if one is to interpret the pent up anger of the American electorate. Think about it, according to the most recent Monmouth University Iowa poll, the Republican or Republican leaning electorate gives 23% to Ben Carson, 23% to Donald Trump, 10% to Carly Fiorina and 9% to Ted Cruz. That adds up to a staggering 65% of conservatives that are calling for an out-of-Washington candidate for President (if one takes the description of a jack ass as allowing Ted Cruz to qualify in that category). This is not likely to hold up, but I am not out to predict the next president but to make the point that a significant number of conservatives are angry with the Republican establishment.

How is it then that a conservative

program at an elite liberal university thrives as American Republican "conservatism" appears in crisis? The answer has to do with what you mean by Conservatism. That is, it has to do as much with content as it has to do with form: it matters what the Madison program stands for and how it is that it advances its ideas. There is no one more conservative than Robert P. George; there is no one more vocal about its conservatism than Robert P. George; and there is no question that the Madison Program embodies true to form the personality of Robert P. George. If conservative ideas are the problem, it would follow that the Madison Program would be in the doghouse at Princeton. Not so.

About ten years ago I was lunching with a very distinguished Princeton humanities professor then retired. This man had never met Robby George and although conservative economically, he was not so on social issues, and thus highly likely of different politics than George. Well, he went on to tell me how grateful he was for what George had done at Princeton. And this was his reason: because by institutionalizing unorthodox speech in the academy, he has written a permission slip for people

like him to speak his mind.

Robby George never attacks the University where he teaches or any of the numerous faculty and students that strongly disagree with him, some of which likely would very much hope he would go elsewhere. But what is more, for Robby this is not a tactic it is a core principle. Were it simply a matter of form, his intellectual adversaries would have sniffed it out and he would reviled. But for Robby, the principle is that human beings best respond when they are challenged to raise the discourse to an intellectual exchange that respects the person that holds those ideas. Attack the ideas, and do it without respite. Respect the person. And fundamentally, this is what human beings want: to be members of a community where they are treated with respect.

It is a truism to say that Princeton faculty and students, and those that come to be associated with the Madison program learn from that example even though few would probably put it this way. A strange thing happened at Princeton University; while campus speech at universities across the country has turned more polarized and vicious, Princeton has turned more civil at least

on one issues about which Robby has been most vocal, and most controversial lately, namely marriage.

I have seen first hand over the years how leaders of the pro-marriage Anscombe Society go out of their way to treat with respect members of the LGBTQ organization, inviting them to dialogue, and to co-sponsor events. I have noticed how the articles in the Daily Princetonian are more evenly distributed amongst dissenting views. What one needs to know also is that not an insignificant number of those students participate in the James Madison student fellowship program where at one time or another, they see the example of how Robby conducts his academic discourse. Conservatives make a big mistake being soft on the social issues because of fear of losing. What we need to do is be civil and convincing on how they make their case. Ask the students and scholar that know the Madison Program first hand.

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*Luis Tellez is the Executive Director of the Witherspoon Institution at Princeton University and works closely with Professor Robert P. (Robby) George.*



# The importance of donors to the National Constitutional Literacy Campaign

By Abby Moffat and David Sandafer

Good ideas are great - but donors need to support good ideas to make them happen. The National Constitutional Literacy Campaign is a good idea, and donors to get behind this effort to make it a great outreach for all Americans. We encourage your active participation in launching this campaign for several important reasons:

First, the courts and particularly the U.S. Supreme Court are constantly reviewing laws to see if they are consistent with the U.S. Constitution. Both students and adults need to know the U.S. Constitution if they want to participate meaningfully in the discussion in the public square on the issues before the court. For example, The Bill of Rights, which was added almost immediately to the Constitution after the Constitution was ratified, guaranteed Americans a list of key rights, including the freedom of speech, right to bear arms, the right to a jury trial, and the right against unreasonable searches and seizures. These basic rights have ensured that all Americans have the freedoms necessary that have allowed the U.S. to become the dominant world leader economically.

Americans' knowledge of the U.S. Constitution (particularly young people) is not what it should be. TIME Magazine reported in 2010. The survey's findings included:

- Only 28% of those surveyed indicated they'd read the entire treatise;
- Approximately 67 % of respondents said the last time they took a look at the Constitution was in high school or college;
- Fortunately, however, 88% believed that the Constitution still works today.

In the area of practical knowledge, survey results indicated that:



**Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.**

- Ronald Reagan

- 61% of respondents thought the Constitution provided for regulating interstate commerce;
- 89% thought the Constitution allowed for printing and regulating money; and
- 90% believed that the Constitution allowed for drawing up treaties

In fact, all of these things are the responsibilities of the federal government, and were not enumerated in the Constitution.

Second, despite the many strengths of the Constitution, this wonderful document is only as strong as the citizenry that constitutes the United States. Without strong civic participation, the Constitution, and therefore the United States itself, could easily lose the very freedoms that have led to its economic prominence.

Of particular concern is a recent Gallup Report. Some of its findings include the following:

Fewer Americans are satisfied with the freedom to choose what they do with

their lives compared with seven years ago—dropping 12 percentage points from 91% in 2006 to 79% in 2013. In that same period, the percentage of Americans dissatisfied with the freedom to choose what they do with their lives more than doubled, from 9% to 21%.

Gallup asks people in more than 120 countries each year whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the freedom to choose what they do with their lives. In 2006, the U.S. ranked among the highest in the world for people reporting satisfaction with their level of freedom. After seven years and a 12-point decline, the U.S. no longer makes the top quartile worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

Third, there are several ways that foundations and individuals can encourage young people to learn the U.S. Constitution and understand why it works. The competitions that are described in this Special Section are an outstanding way to encourage students and their parents to understand the U.S. Constitution. If we

can get more competitions going around the country, we can turn around the negative trends in freedom that the Gallup organization has found.

As a Foundation, we have been supporting organizations, such as the Federalist Society that encourages debates on the Constitution and The Daniel Morgan Academy which helps to ensure that future generations will be able to better participate in the security of their country. Organizations are what keep momentum going. When organizations come together like the National Constitution Literacy Coalition, it makes it more compelling for foundations to show support.

Albert Einstein got it right when he said, "The strength of the Constitution lies entirely in the determination of each citizen to defend it. Only if every single citizen feels duty bound to do his share in this defense are the constitutional rights secure."<sup>6</sup>

It is our duty, both as citizens and as civic leaders, to ensure that the Constitution remains protected for future generations of Americans. Foundations play an essential role in ensuring that the organizations devoted to educating our citizens about the Constitution and American government have the resources and tools they need to be effective.

Abby S. Moffat is Executive Vice President of the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation. David Sandafer was a summer intern at the organization.

<sup>5</sup> Reported July 1, 2014. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/172019/americans-less-satisfied-freedom.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/FederalistSociety/posts/438311639587401>



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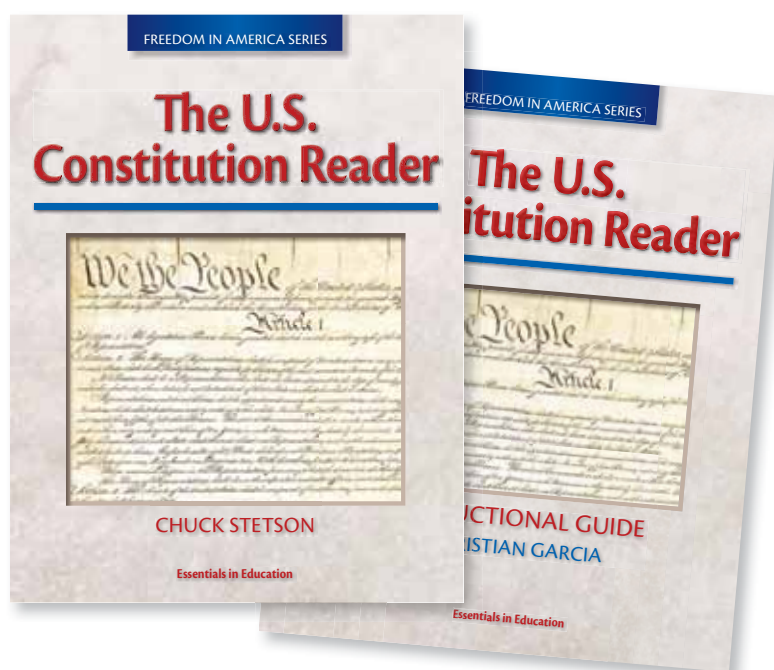
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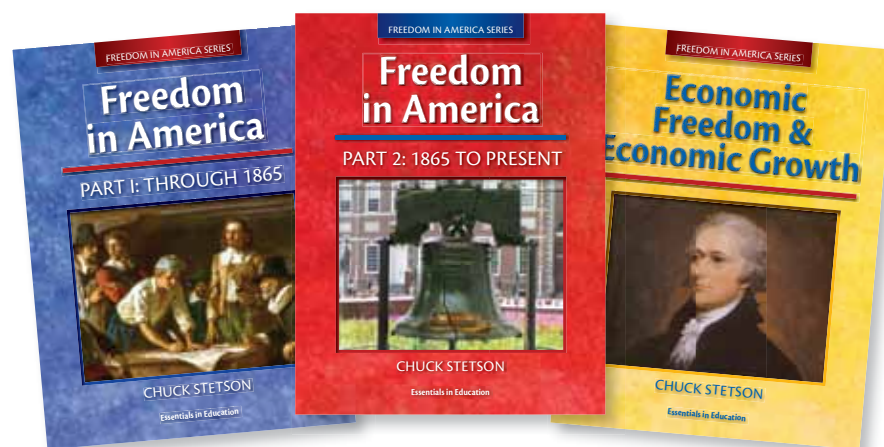
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