

A large group of young people, likely students, are posed on the wide stone steps of the U.S. Capitol building. They are dressed in formal business attire, including suits, blazers, and dresses. The group is arranged in several rows, with some individuals standing on the steps and others on the ground in front. The background features the iconic white dome of the Capitol and the classical architecture of the building's facade, including columns and a pediment with statues. The sky is clear and blue.

# **BILL *of* RIGHTS**

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# **INSTITUTE**

Annual Report 2015



THE BILL OF RIGHTS INSTITUTE

# VISION

The Institute envisions a society in which all individuals enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is a society in which:

- Students **engage** with and champion these rights for themselves and others.

- Teachers **educate** students to seek knowledge and tackle challenges with these rights in mind.

- Parents **empower** their children to apply these rights in their own lives through interaction, example, and dialogue.

# MISSION

The Bill of Rights Institute engages, educates, and empowers individuals with a passion for the freedom and opportunity that exist in a free society.



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the Bill of Rights Institute, we have the privilege of working with tens of thousands of young people who are awakening to the power of constitutional thinking.

These student leaders see that the challenges they face today are connected to the ideas of America's Founders. Whether it's college affordability or the proper role of government, immigration policy or the right to religious liberty, young Americans are discovering that the Constitution's framework of freedom matters in their lives.

By wrestling with questions about justice, equality, and responsibility, students realize what's at stake for their future—and the future of the nation.

As they do so, they understand that promises from politicians today are not nearly so important as the promise of the Declaration of Independence—that all human beings are equal in their possession of natural rights, and that government's duty is to protect those rights.

*David  
Bobb*

When young people study these principles with us, and learn from the more than 50,000 teachers with

whom we work, their engagement with liberty grows. Ideas inform their actions. Actions become habits of heart and mind. And commitment to liberty becomes lifelong.

"Since you were born," we asked high school students as part of this past year's We the Students essay contest, "has America moved closer to or further away from the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence?"

More than 10,000 students entered the contest, and through it we were able to reach more than ten times the number of students as in the previous year's contest. Combined with a forty percent increase in our teacher network over the last year, this dramatic growth means that we're reaching more students nationwide than ever before—nearly 4.5 million in all.

*“When students learn about individuals of exemplary moral virtue, and extraordinary civic courage, they are able to see the importance of history. They are inspired to engage the world around them, and build a better civil society. They learn to live in freedom.”*

Each year, some three million 18-year-olds become eligible to vote in the United States. Approximately 430,000 high school students take the Advanced Placement U.S. History exam every spring. And more than 50,000 secondary students are involved in organized debating.

Each one of these students – and every teenager – is trying to find their voice. They want to know that they matter.

My amazing colleagues at the Bill of Rights Institute are dedicated to helping young people assume the responsibilities and rights of citizenship.

Frederick Douglass, ex-slave, orator, and statesman, said in 1863, “A single individual, armed with truth, is a majority against the world.”

When students learn about individuals of exemplary moral virtue, and extraordinary civic courage, they are able to see the importance of history. They are inspired to engage the world around them, and build a better civil society.

They learn to live in freedom.

When I tell people about the mission and work of the Bill of Rights Institute, many wonder if it’s too late, or too difficult, to reach young people. Have ignorance and apathy won the day?

Thanks to your faithful support, I am happy to tell them that not only is it not too late nor too difficult, but it’s being done, every day, in ways that should give all of us hope for the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Bobb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BILL of RIGHTS  
INSTITUTE

ENGAGE  
*for students*

EDUCATE  
*for teachers*

EMPOWER  
*for supporters*

menu

# EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE *about* THE CONSTITUTION

Our goal is to help the next generation understand the freedom & opportunity the Constitution offers.

“The Bill of Rights Institute is fantastic! Well balanced, educational, informational, everything.”

— Denise Payne, Teacher, Utah

TEACHERS

Download Free Lesson Plans!

View the Bill of Rights & other Founding Documents



A person's profile is visible on the right side of the image, looking towards a smartphone on the left. The phone screen shows a collage of photos, including a woman in a black top and a group of people. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

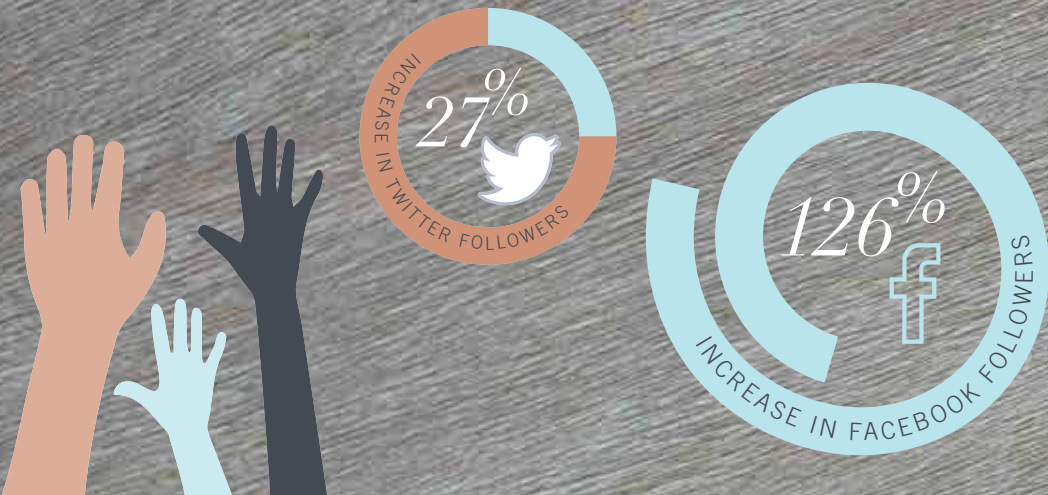
NEW LOGO, NEW WEBSITE,  
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

# A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

The Institute spent 2015 listening to and interacting with more than 10,000 individuals through surveys and focus groups. The key to a successful organization is one that responds to the needs of its audiences. With aggressive goals for growth over the next five years, we sought to ascertain the strength of our brand and our position in the market. Students, teachers, and parents alike let us know they felt like our website and branding did not represent the fantastic work happening in homes and classrooms. This valuable insight set the foundation for a fundamental transformation of our look and feel that has positioned the Institute for more successful outreach.



# A Strong Brand

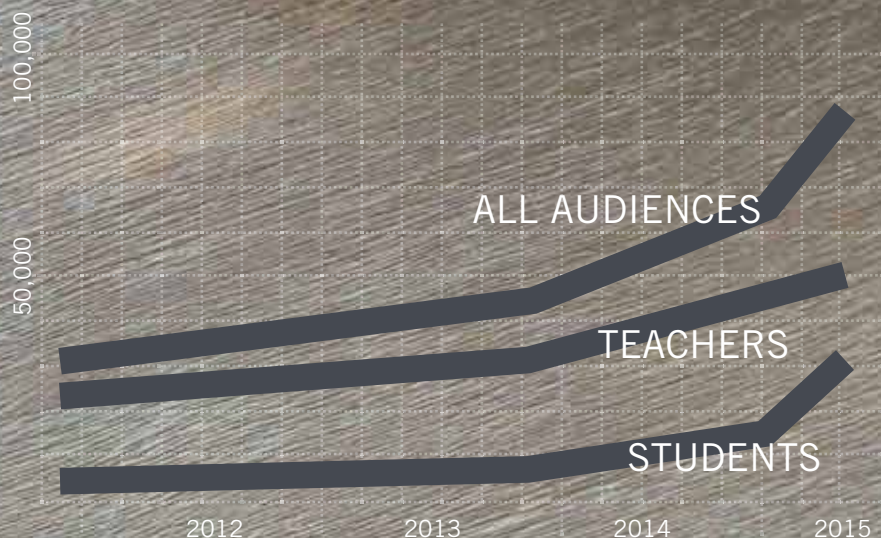


Winner of the  
2015 Spark Freedom  
Trendsetter Award  
for Brand Identity





# EXPANDING OUR IMPACT



WEEKLY COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT

More than 19,000 people  
liked a Constitution Day  
Instagram Post





A LOOK BACK AT 2015

# ENGAGE

The Institute is committed to regularly assessing the interests and needs of the more than 30,000 students in our network. 2015 was no different; following the development of a new brand identity, we connected with more than 7,000 individual students to learn what students actually WANT. What issues do they care about, what social media applications do they actually use, what do they want from our newsletters and programs, and how can we connect with them in and out of the classroom? The Institute is positioned to become the go-to resource for information on civics, current events, and citizenship.

By injecting student feedback into our existing programs and charting new horizons with entrepreneurial endeavors in new programs, the Institute now offers a wide array of opportunities for students to not only engage with constitutional principles but apply them to their daily lives through current events, debates, forums, and in-person programs.





## WE THE STUDENTS ESSAY CONTEST

2015 marked a year of exponential growth for the We the Students Essay Contest, with a 1,000% increase in student participation – yes, you read that right, more than 17,000 students engaged with the Institute through the essay contest last year. Tasked with assessing if, since their birth, the United States has moved closer to or farther from the ideals in the Declaration of Independence, students submitted answers reflecting knowledge, thoughtfulness, and the ability to deeply analyze some of the most significant problems affecting our country. More than 80% of these students signed up to receive Institute communications, meaning we directly reach more students with more information than ever before.



## CONSTITUTION CONNECTION

Continuing our commitment to engaging students with the principles of a free society, our Constitution Connection program reached more than 4,000 students nationwide through student and teacher sponsored activities. Examples include classroom debates on current events, field trips, mock court opportunities, study sessions, social media discussions, and even a birthday party for James Madison!



## CONSTITUTIONAL ACADEMY

Every year, the Institute hosts some of the best and brightest high school students in the country for a weeklong experience in D.C. The 2015 Constitutional Academy attracted 42 of the most engaged students yet. Participants spent the week wrestling with the ideas of the Declaration of Independence and discussing how natural rights apply to modern policy debates, including criminal justice reform, marriage policy, and individual privacy with policy experts, scholars, and each other. Off-site visits to Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress including Senator Mike Lee (UT) and Representative Justin Amash (MI-3), the Holocaust Museum and the Newseum provided additional engagement opportunities for all involved.





## STUDENT FEATURE

Butler, Pennsylvania  
Constitutional Academy

*Caroline  
Lindsey*

Honors: Voted “Most Likely to Run the Constitutional Academy in 10 years” by my Constitutional Academy peers; co-president of the speech and debate team; graduate of the Leadership Institute’s Youth Leadership School in Arlington, Virginia; first place winner for Senior Individual Exhibit for the National History Day’s Pittsburgh regional competition.

### **What was your favorite part of the Academy?**

In the past, most of my peers in school have had this apathy towards my love of history, economics and politics. I always felt that students my own age saw me as an outsider because of my passion for discussing current events and learning more about our founding documents. I even at times dealt with opponents inside and outside of the classroom who were very against my support of the Constitution. Thankfully, at the Academy, I found the opposite. I discovered that there are professors and teachers who praised the Founding Fathers rather than degrade them.

I connected with other bright young constitution-  
alists who believe that it  
is up to us, the rising gen-

eration, to restore America back to the country the founders intended. And I felt a sense of mutual admiration and respect from these classmates I only spent a few days with.

### **What Founding ideals do you plan to spread to your peers?**

In the few days since I have started my junior year, I have been talking non-stop about my life changing week at the Academy. In history class, I have had to defend the idea that American citizens are guaranteed the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as well as John Locke’s life, liberty and property. And that the government has no power to infringe on these rights without a citizen’s right to due process. The Bill of Rights has been my source of credibility through it all. But the idea I have constantly been talking about is every man’s right to liberty. I truly believe this when I say that America is the land of opportunity. I see the role of government as minimal in Americans’ everyday lives.

# Engage: Student Programs

The Institute interacted with **22,213**  
unique students through our student programs in FY 2015.

The Institute has more than **32,000** active students in its network.

The Institute, through our students and teacher programs,  
impacted **835,400** students in FY 2015.

The Institute has connected more than **3,400**  
students with other organizations.

More than **17,000** students entered our 2014/2015  
We the Students Essay Contest.

Since 1999, the Institute has reached  
**4,416,500** students.



## TEACHER PROGRAMS

# EDUCATE

This spring, the 2014 History and Civics NAEP results were released, putting on full display the necessity of the Institute's work with our network of more than 50,000 teachers. With less than a quarter of eighth graders proficient in civics, and 18% proficient in U.S. history, and with more than half of those same eighth graders believing that the purpose of government is to guarantee them a job, our work is more vital than ever. In 2015, the Institute took our programs and resources to new heights, digitizing eight of our most popular curricula, expanding the number of teachers using our digital resources, and continuing our commitment to providing the resources necessary for every teacher to ignite a passion for the ideas of liberty in their classrooms.





## FOUNDERS FELLOWSHIP

This year, 44 teachers from 11 states attended the 2015 Founders Fellowship entitled “Liberty and Security”. Participants spent the week discussing the Founding documents and related Supreme Court cases with Institute master teachers and Dr. Joshua Dunn of the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Participants were provided with Bill of Rights Institute lessons and activities to help them take what they learned back to their classrooms and visited the National Archives, a U.S. federal court, and the Newseum to enhance their experience and gain additional teaching strategies.



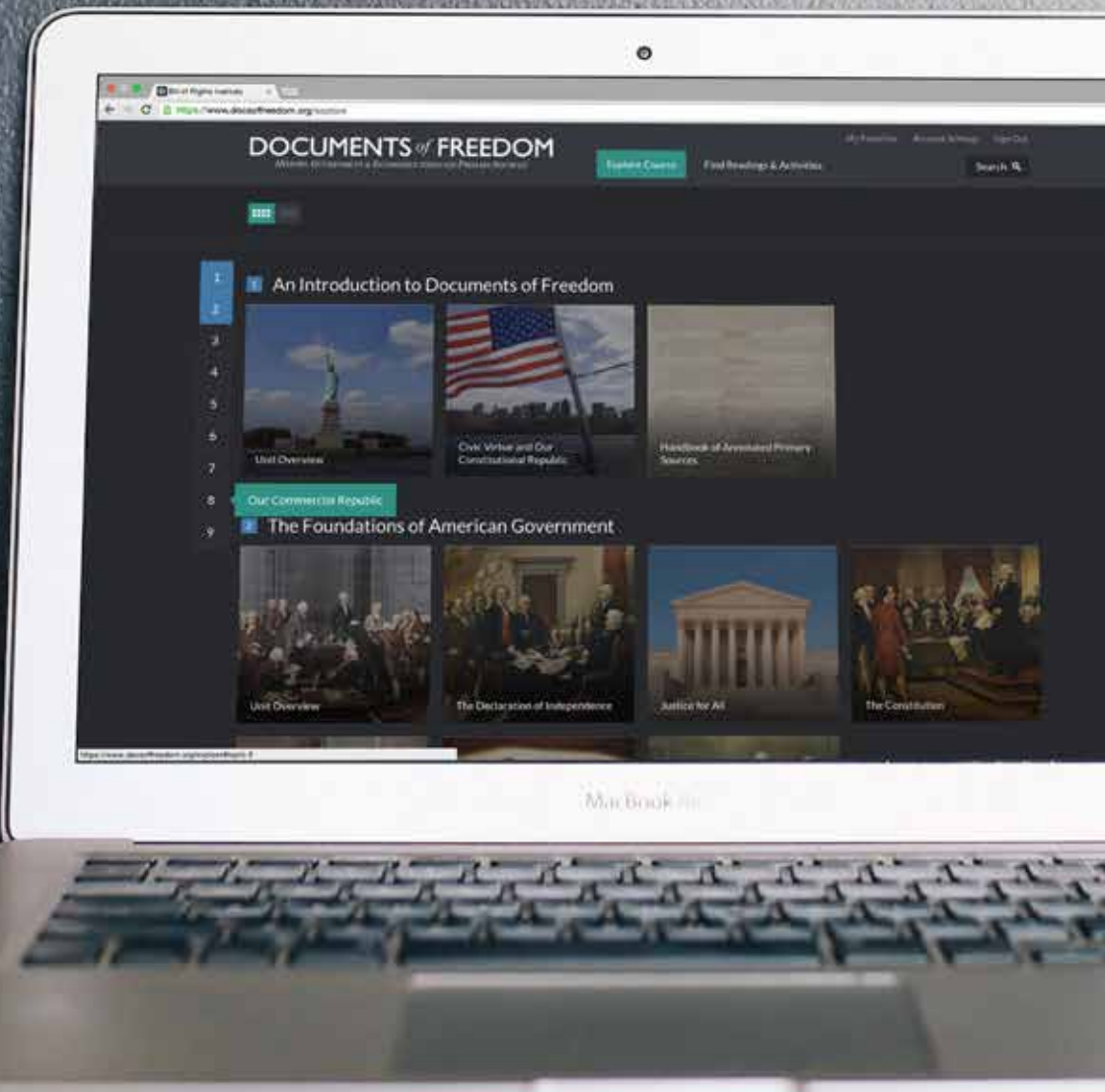
## CONSTITUTIONAL WORKSHOPS

During the 2014-15 school year, the Institute hosted 22 Constitutional Workshops in 12 states, training 865 teachers. Topics including “Preserving the Bill of Rights: Due Process Protections”, “Heroes and Villains: The Quest for Civic Virtue”, “Documents of Freedom: A Tradition of Rights”, “Presidents and the Constitution: The President and Federal Power”, “Being an American: Teaching the Founding Documents” and “Federalism and the Constitution”. Attendees were provided with a Bill of Rights Institute curriculum and teaching strategies that help them take the concepts they discussed with our master teacher and scholar back to their classrooms. Post-program support for the teachers is regularly provided through our many website resources and bi-weekly eLessons.



## DOCUMENTS OF FREEDOM

Capitalizing on the success of the 2014 launch of our online textbook, the Institute partnered with Tufts University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) for an evaluation of *Documents of Freedom*, our completely free, comprehensive digital course on history, government, and economics. Students using *Documents of Freedom* scored 18.3 percentage points higher than the control group in knowledge of history, government, and economics, and 8.3 percentage points over the control group with a gain in affinity for the importance of civic virtue and constitutional principles. In addition, 88.5 percent of the educators using the resource stated that they would incorporate civic virtue into their future lessons. In addition, as of October 2015, more than 13,000 educators are using *Documents of Freedom* in their classrooms.





# Educate : Teacher Programs



More than 50,000 individuals are actively engaging with the Institute and our resources

1,050 teachers participated in a BRI in-person program in FY 2015.

23,085 teachers have participated in our in-person program since 1999.

The Institute has produced more than 23 individual curricula, a comprehensive digital textbook (*Documents of Freedom*), and has digitized eight curricula for use at *Voices of History*.

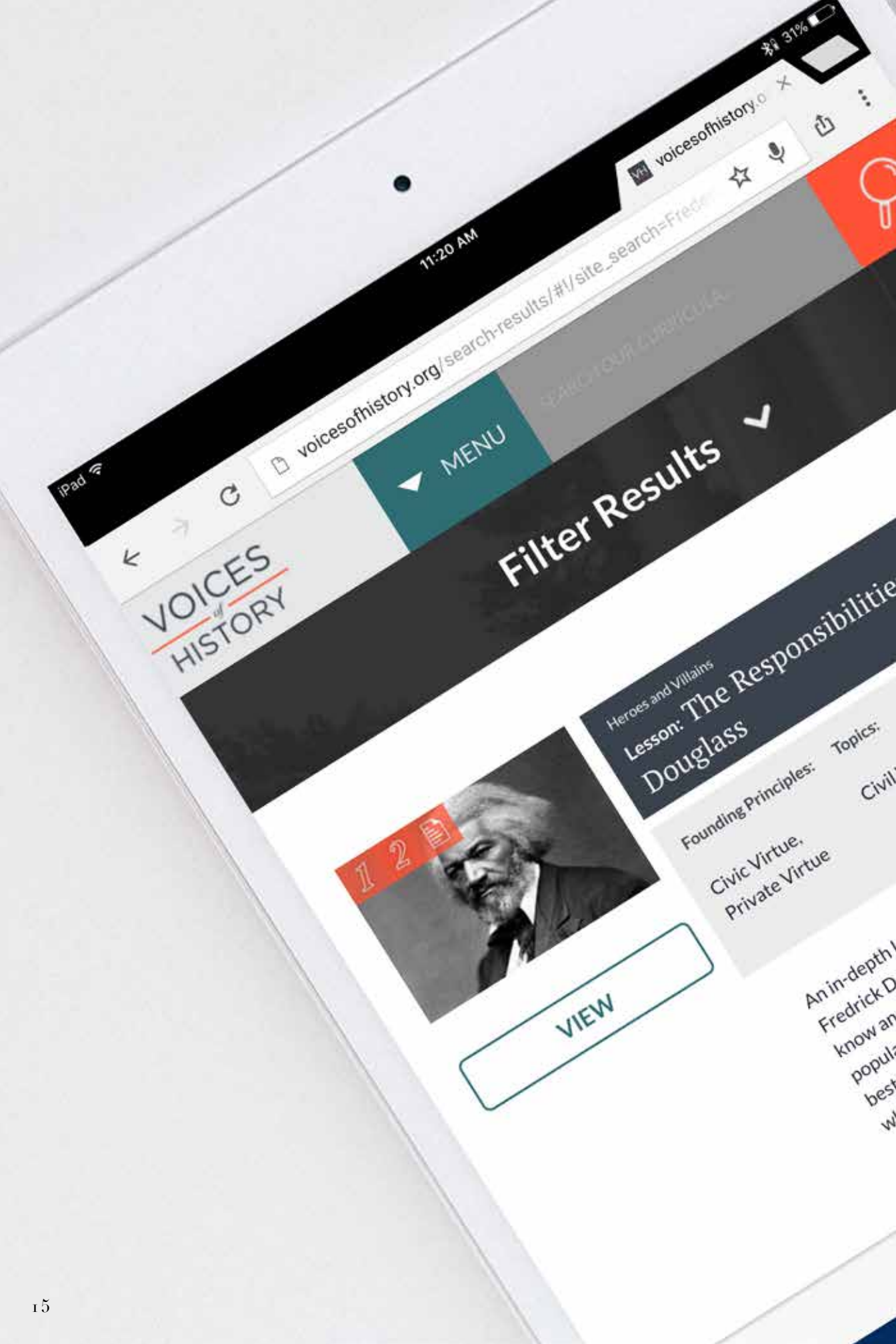
More than 13,000 individual teachers are using *Documents of Freedom* in their classrooms. More than 8,000 individuals teachers are using resources hosted on *Voices of History* in their classrooms. Among these are more than 1,000 homeschool families and more than 2,000 educators in private, parochial, and charter schools.

13,000 using *Documents of Freedom*

8,000 using *Voices of History*

*Documents of Freedom & Voices of History*







# VOICES *of* HISTORY

The launch of our newest resource, *Voices of History*, represents an exciting new era for the Institute. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we now offer eight of the Institute's most popular curricula in FREE digital form. With school budgets tighter and quality resources scarce, *Voices of History* has been a breath of fresh air to the more than 50,000 teachers in our network. Content on the site is indexed and searchable to optimize the ease of use for teachers that are constantly on the go. In fact, since it launched, more than 8,000 users have visited *Voices of History*, engaging with content spanning every era and topic one could imagine from:

*Being An American*  
*Being An American for English Language Learners*  
*Founders and the Constitution (Vol. I and II)*  
*Heroes and Villains*  
*Preserving the Bill of Rights*  
*Supreme Court Document Based Questions (Vol. I and II)*  
*Liberty and Security in Modern Times*  
*Religious Liberty: An American Experiment*



## TEACHER FEATURE

Classroom Teacher  
Wichita Public Schools:  
Southeast High School

*Katherine  
Annette Saar*

A.A., Northeastern Oklahoma A&M; B.A., Oklahoma State University; M.A.T., Emporia State University

### **Why did you decide to get involved with the Bill of Rights Institute?**

I got involved with BRI because of the amazing resources offered and the founding principles that are at the core of their lessons.

### **In what ways have the Bill of Rights Institute's programs and resources impacted your teaching and how does that translate into student impact?**

I was a veteran teacher when I attended my first BRI seminar. It was an eye opening day to see the resources that were available. It caused me to rethink how I was teaching many of the topics in my classroom. These activities recharged my spirit and that translates to a more engaging environment in my classroom. The founders are no longer old dead guys to my students...they are alive!!

### **What is your biggest achievement as a teacher?**

My biggest achievement as a teacher is seeing my students go on and be successful citizens once they leave my classroom and

high school. I have taught for almost 30 years in my current school and see many of my former students on a daily basis. I believe there are currently 10 working in my building this year. When I hear back from students how something I taught them years ago still makes sense to them today I am reminded of the many blessings I have in my life because of "my" students. This spring I'll have one of my former students as my student teacher.

### **How has your teaching changed since becoming involved with the Bill of Rights Institute?**

My teaching has changed in many ways since I got involved with BRI. I use many more primary source documents and I'm no longer afraid of them. I am also not afraid to try new types of activities. One day we'll have a press conference quizzing one of the founders and the next day we might be doing a Socratic seminar over one of the *Federalist Papers*.





## SCHOLAR FEATURE

Associate Professor of  
Political Science

University of  
Colorado Colorado Springs

Ph.D., Government, University of Virginia; Director, Center for the Study of Government and the Individual; Individual Legal Beat Columnist, *Education Next*

*Joshua  
Matthew Dunn, Sr.*

notoriously offer little of substance and value. In contrast, BRI provides a rich set of seminars that

provide real benefit for teachers. As well, the curriculum that BRI provides is invaluable. Teachers are clearly hungry for substantial and engaging material for their students and BRI provides that for them.

**Why did you decide to get involved with the Bill of Rights Institute?**

As a political science professor who specializes in public law, I am always delighted when I hear about organizations devoted to teaching the principles of American government. Getting involved with BRI really wasn't much of a choice. When the invitation to teach in the seminar arrived I immediately wanted to do it.

**What does the Institute do that stands out from other organizations?**

The focus on helping teachers understand the foundational principles of American government is unique. I know of no other organization that does as much for so many teachers. Professional development programs for teachers

**Why are the Institute's efforts to create a constitutional culture vital at this time in our nation's history?**

It is a dangerous sign when elected officials publicly declare that they are unconcerned with whether the Constitution authorizes their actions. The alternative to constitutional government and the rule of law is arbitrary government. According to John Locke, being free from arbitrary rule is necessary for liberty. American citizens need to know America's founding principles so that they can hold their elected officials accountable when they display no concern for constitutional government.



DONORS

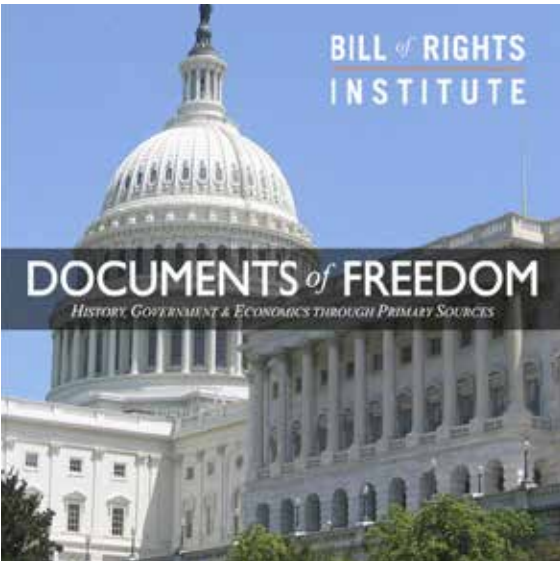
# EMPOWER

The Institute's ability to impact our nation's civic knowledge and engagement is made possible by the participation and generosity of thousands of students, teachers, parents, partners, foundations, and individual donors. Our goal is to empower individuals with the tools necessary to apply the founding principles in their lives, interactions, dialogue, and decisions. In 2015, we expanded our outreach in classrooms, online, and in the media, raising our profile and placing the Institute at the forefront of civic discussion.

# CONNECTIONS, INFLUENCE, AND PRESENCE

The Institute spent 2015 investing in storytelling identifying who we are, who our audiences are, and who they think WE are. As importantly, we are focused on bringing these three inquiries together to provide the Institute increased strength of brand identity and affinity.

Our brand now exemplifies the development of new leaders, not just reference to past leaders. Our re-designed website provides a picture of hope, of the future that is possible if we engage students with principles in a way that means something to their daily lives. It's a future where we can offer teachers the tools necessary to succeed in the ever-changing modern classroom. Where parents can access resources to connect with their children in a homeschool or at the dinner table.



Where donors can tangibly see their impact and be inspired by the effects of their investment.

On Constitution Day, the Institute launched an innovative, creative student outreach quiz called “Swift Your Rights” where students matched the Bill of Rights to related Taylor Swift lyrics. More than 30,000 individuals interacted with the quiz in the first seven days!



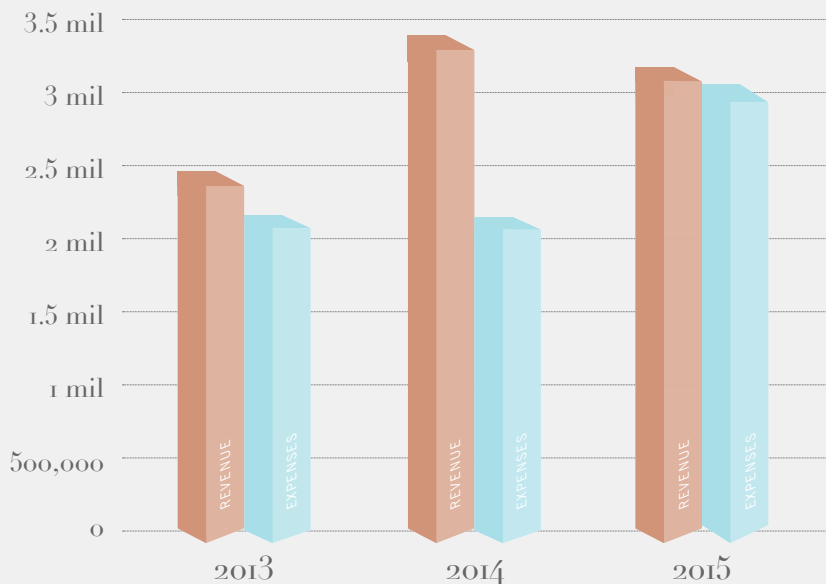
Thanks to our increased brand reach, the Institute has benefited from numerous radio and television interviews by staff members, including twelve appearances on Fox and Friends for an estimated total of \$2.4 million in earned advertising time for the Institute.



# Financial Information



# Revenue & Expenses



## BRI IS SUPPORTED BY

31 Corporations, 127 Foundations & 8,500 Individuals

Revenue	2013	2014	2015*
Foundations	1,590,730	2,081,667	1,754,477
Individuals	382,021	813,221	633,193
Corporations	47,000	47,350	149,101
Program and Partner	182,021	159,167	181,193
Sales and Other	166,954	211,643	123,082
In-Kind Support	3,000	7,000	263,921
Total Revenue	2,371,726	3,320,048	3,104,967
Expenses			
Programs	1,507,326	1,393,894	2,063,615
Outreach and Fundraising	412,700	516,010	619,084
General and Administrative	171,365	167,128	265,323
Total Expenses	2,091,391	2,077,032	2,948,022
Revenue - Expenses	280,335	1,243,016	156,945

\*FY 2015 numbers pending audit

# 2016 & BEYOND





# STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Engage 25,000 more teachers with innovative programs and resources to directly affect their affinity for a free society.

Empower tens of thousands of parents with the tools and information necessary to interact with their children on key issues and principles, thereby fostering civics renewal in local schools.

3. Grow our social media presence to more than 100,000 followers, increasing the Institute's digital footprint and influence.

Expand student engagement via the delivery of real-time current events content on mobile devices.

# ENGAGE



## THINK THE VOTE

What is a primary? How do caucuses work? Does my vote matter in the Electoral College? Elections and the electoral process can be confusing, and students and teachers struggle to find quality resources for classroom discussions. In response to demand by both students and teachers, the Institute is developing Think the Vote, an interactive, evergreen educational resource that will allow students to see candidates stances on critical issues, learn how debates have shaped elections throughout history, discover how their state impacts the Electoral College, and much, much, more.

## REVITALIZED NEWSLETTER ENGAGEMENT

Continuing our commitment to listening and responding to feedback, the Institute now offers two student newsletters, #BRIBuzz, a weekly en-

gagement newsletter offering insights on current events, fun historical facts, and #BRISConnect, a way for students to learn about scholarships, internships, and opportunities with the Institute and our partner organizations. Our new Single Sign-On system allows students to provide us with expanded profile information, including colleges and majors they are exploring, so that we can provide them information on those programs and organizations that best align to them.

## STUDENT DEBATE AND CONSTITUTION CONNECTION

Debate, discussion, and discourse are critical to the development and implementation of new ideas. Students participating in debate, both formal and informal, pose an exciting opportunity for the Institute to connect with leaders interested in changing the world for the better and to empower them with Institute resources and programs that will reach far beyond these individual students. Through an expanded online platform, students will participate in point/counterpoint discussions on current events via our revitalized Constitution Connection program, applying constitutional principles to the major policy debates of our time.

# EDUCATE

## HIGH POVERTY CLASSROOMS

Public education has reached a tipping point where the majority of students qualify for free and reduced lunches and live below the poverty line. We know that increasing civic engagement and educating individual students on the promise of opportunity can lead to amazing accomplishments—but we also know that each community impacted by multi-generational poverty is unique with its own problems and solutions. This year, the Institute will conduct a field study of five key high poverty areas, learning from community leaders and those teachers on the ground what we can do to engage students and teachers in the most need of our resources.

## EXPANDING OUR PRESENCE IN SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

The Institute believes that every child should have access to a quality education and that the education they receive meets the needs of their individual family. While continuing our strong relationship with public school teachers and administrators, the Institute will expand on its successful 2015 research and relationship building project with charter, parochial, private, and home school educators and families, increasing the number of institutions and homes using our resources.



## RECOGNIZING EDUCATOR EXCELLENCE

In early 2016, the Institute will launch a new program honoring a Bill of Rights Institute Civics Teacher of the Year. Students will nominate their teacher with a video explaining how the individual teacher has impacted their lives, placing ten of the top videos on our website for crowd-sourced nationwide vote. The winning educator will receive a scholarship to Founders Fellowship and a cash prize.

## NEW TO SERVICE TEACHERS

Having quality teachers in the classroom committed to longevity with the profession is key to future educational success for all students. The Institute will begin targeted outreach to teachers within the first three years of service, learning from them what they need to grow and remain in the profession and how we can become their go-to resource for civics education.



# BILL *of* RIGHTS INSTITUTE

To our supporters across the country, thank you.

Without you, students like Caroline Lindey would still be apathetic to the very principles that will allow her to flourish once she completes her studies. Without you, teachers like Kathy Saar wouldn't have the resources necessary to put our Founding principles at the core of their lessons.

Together we're **engaging** the students necessary to turn the tide on civic apathy and ensure those who vote for the first time next year do so with a focus on principles, not promises.

I ask that you continue to invest in our work so we can **educate** the next generation to promote and defend our freedoms. Through your partnership we will continue to develop resources such as *Documents of Freedom* and programs that excite students so they can build a lasting commitment to liberty.

The coming year is full of promise and with your support we will capitalize on this opportunity and continue **empowering** students to become informed and engaged citizens.

I'm excited to keep you updated on our progress. If you have any questions on our programs and strategy, or would like to know how to donate appreciated stock or create a legacy of liberty through a planned gift, please don't hesitate to contact me.

All of us at the Institute are grateful for your making this vital work possible. I look forward to partnering again in the coming year.

With gratitude,



Rupert Munro  
Director of Development





# STAFF

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**Chief Operating Officer Adam Cushing**

**Vice President of Education Michelle Hess**

**Vice President of Communications Whitney Neal**

**Director of Development Rupert Munro**

**Director of Curriculum and Professional Development Gennie Westbrook**

**Director of Student Programs Jeffrey Horne**

**Database Manager Jaffe Abeshaus**

**Digital Marketing Manager James Miller**

**Education Projects Manager Kirk Higgins**

**Grants Manager Kyrsten York**

**Manager of Programs and Events Laura Vlk**

**Professional Development Instructor Tony Williams**

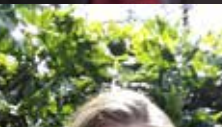
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**External Relations Coordinator Austin Pendergist**

**Administrative Assistant Kate Hufford**

**Student Programs Associate Michael Levine**

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