

A group of approximately 20 young people, likely students, are posed for a group photo in front of the U.S. Capitol building. They are dressed in formal attire, including suits, blouses, and dresses. The Capitol building's iconic dome and neoclassical architecture are visible in the background under a clear sky. An American flag flies on a tall pole in front of the building.

# ANNUAL REPORT

*2016-2017*

**BILL *of* RIGHTS**  

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**INSTITUTE**



# 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.

# 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.

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*David J. Bobb*

# President's Letter

*David Bobb*

According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress exam on civics, more than half of American 8th graders believe that the purpose of government is to provide people jobs.

Overall, on that same test, less than a quarter of 8th and 12th graders demonstrated basic proficiency in civics and American history.

Rather than blaming students and teachers for this failure, the Bill of Rights Institute has built a strong community of some 45,000 educators nationwide. Together we are solving the crisis of civic education—classroom by classroom and student by student—so that each young person can know and defend the principles of the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

For this report, we have decided shift our focus to the school year rather than the calendar year because it aligns with the work that we are doing with teachers and students. As you will see, the Institute has succeeded in expanding the scope of our existing programs and resources while reaching an ever-growing number of educators and young people across the country.

Next school year, plans are under way to bring our in-person events to more parts of the country while developing our MyImpact Challenge citizenship program to provide young people across the nation with a more expansive definition of citizenship, grounded in civic virtue and constitutional principles. Look for more academic resources in the form of Homework Help videos, AP U.S. History webinars, and primary-source and narrative-based lessons that bring the history of our country to life.

None of this is possible without the tremendous support of our donors—individuals, corporations, and foundations. We are grateful for these partnerships which have been forged in the spirit of the great 19th-century abolitionist, orator, and civil rights leader, Frederick Douglass, who wrote in 1863 that “A single individual—armed with truth—is a majority against the world.”



# Student Spotlight

## *Madalyn Foley*

2016 Constitutional Academy Participant, 2016 Debate Outreach Program Honors: Madalyn is part of the National Honor Society, National French Honor Society, a two-time Future Business Leaders of America Nationals Qualifier, a Missouri State High School Activities Association State Speech and Debate Policy Champion, and a Missouri We the People State Champion (2016).

Opinionated,” “Invested in politics,” and “Owning a voice of her own.” These are just a few ways her peers and Constitutional Academy colleagues have characterized Madalyn Foley, a senior from Nixa High School in Nixa, Missouri. Noting how actively involved she is in her school and community, Institute staff also observe that she, “could debate and discuss policy as well as any participant in the history of the Academy.”

Madalyn looks to instill the founding principles into many areas of her life. She spends a lot of her time relating the founding ideas of absolute freedom and free movement of information to current marketing and education practices. “I spend a lot of my Twitter characters defending policies and politicians I believe in,” says Madalyn, comparing her commitment to these principles to Alexander Hamilton’s commitment to The Federalist Papers.



Reflecting back on the Academy, Madalyn describes the experience as, “an opportunity to learn from political professionals and historians, as well as a chance to refresh my beliefs after hearing academic discourse among other students and participating in Academy debates.” She also credits the Academy with helping her explore career opportunities while

connecting her with prominent D.C. figures. Madalyn will be graduating in 2017. Her goals include working on political campaigns through campaign marketing, and eventually running for office herself. She is passionate about criminal justice and prison reform, and hopes to use her skills to create change in both of those areas.

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# Student Spotlight

*Daniel Paviglianiti*

Two-time Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) state attendee, Silver Medal winner at the Head of Ohio (2015), and Bronze Medal winner at Midwest Rowing Regionals (2015)

**F**or Daniel Paviglianiti, a senior at Fox Chapel Area High School in Pittsburgh, the Bill of Rights Institute’s Constitutional Academy provided him an unprecedented opportunity to have “open and civil discussions on a variety of hot political topics with students from all over the nation.” Says Daniel, “Constitutional Academy strengthened my understanding of the Constitution.”

It was after Daniel participated in the Institute’s online debate platform that he was selected to attend the 2016 Academy. Daniel’s inquisitive, hard-working nature and collaborative work ethic quickly drew the attention of the Institute staff. While attending the Academy, Daniel embraced the opportunity to meet with senators and representatives from his home state of Pennsylvania, and this experience has encouraged him to pursue a political science major.

Beyond his academic pursuits, Daniel is an active member of his school’s Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) team, crew team, forensics club, chess club, and orchestra. Daniel’s diligence and hard work have paid off, as he has become a regional silver and bronze medalist in crew, and is a two-time state qualifier in FBLA. Daniel is also an unabashed history buff, a passion reflected in the way he has excelled in his AP U.S. History, AP World History, and AP Government courses.

When asked about the role the Constitution and the founding principles play in his life, he says, “I want to tie the Constitution into my life by respecting the rights that I believe everyone has.”

Daniel believes that the Constitution is the most important document in our country’s history, as it facilitates freedom and secures specific rights for our citizens.

Daniel is looking forward to graduating this upcoming spring and taking his talents to either the University of Pittsburgh, Holy Cross College Notre Dame, Indiana, Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan, or Loyola University in Maryland. After majoring in political science or business, Daniel aspires to attend law school to become a Constitutional lawyer. He desires to help others understand their rights and guarantee their protection by the Constitution.



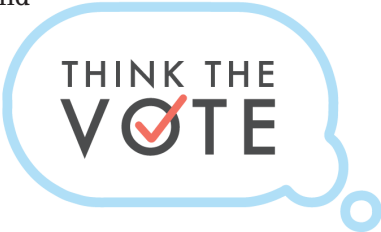


# Student Programs

## Think the Vote

A new initiative of the Institute, Think the Vote offered the nearly 3 million newly eligible voters who turned 18 in 2016 and their younger peers a place to learn about American elections. The Think the Vote website attracted over 176,905 unique page views in 2016, engaging students on key election issues. In early 2017, the site was relaunched as a place for young people to learn about election issues. The site includes links to news articles, and interactive student polls as well as an online debate platform called Bridge the Divide.

[www.thinkthevote.com](http://www.thinkthevote.com)



*40,000 unique visitors  
leading up to  
Election Day 2016*

## Bridge the Divide

Bridge the Divide is the online debate platform on the Think the Vote website. By proposing a tough question every two weeks on tough issues ranging from immigration to national security, we encourage students to engage in civil debate and provide resources to help them research the topic. The site is continuously updated with pro and con responses, and students who provide the most compelling answers on either side are awarded \$25 gift cards.





# Constitutional Academy

This annual program brings the brightest student minds from across the country together in Washington, D.C., to take in the historical sites and interact with policy makers and thought leaders. Students develop their understanding of American government through thoughtful discussions and robust debate on the critical issues of the day. The Academy experience gives participants the confidence to pursue careers in thought leadership, and provides them with opportunities to pursue internships with nonprofits and government agencies.



**Five  
Million**

high school students  
reached with our programs  
and curricula

# We the Students Essay Contest

Each year, the Institute awards more \$20,000 in prizes, including a \$5,000 grand prize, to 8th through 12th grade students who submit 500–800 word essays focused on a topic related to the ideas of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and their relevance today.

The 2016–2017 contest focused on the theme “Does peaceful resistance to laws positively or negatively impact a free society?” The contest has grown tenfold over the last several years, engaging more than 27,000 students from across the country in the last year alone.



# Teacher Spotlight

*Michael Rohlin*

Chautauqua Lake Central School District—Mayville, N.Y.  
VFW Citizenship Teacher Award for Western New York

New to The Institute’s programs in the fall of 2016, Michael Rohlin had already proven himself to be a dedicated educator. The first clue was when he drove several hours from Mayville, New York, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to participate in BRI’s “Congress: The First Branch and the Constitution” seminar.

During the seminar, Michael was eager to contribute during the discussion groups. The other participants found his enthusiasm inspiring and infectious.



When asked about his feelings regarding the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the first word that came to Michael’s mind was “passion.” He believes that it is his passion for the Founding

documents that drives him to engage his students with lessons and activities centered around these key documents. To facilitate student learning, Michael consistently uses BRI’s resources to help his students better understand our nation’s Founding.

Michael discusses the importance of the Constitution with his students and helps them learn about the Founding documents through a focus on the inner-workings of the government. His goal is to ensure that everyone leaves his class

with a basic understanding of the roles of each branch and how they operate in our modern world. This award-winning teacher says he feels a real sense of accomplishment when students tell him that it was his class that helped them to better understand our government.

Beyond the classroom, Michael speaks with the parents of his students about encouraging their children to become involved in community and civic activities. Many of his current and former students are now engaged as young citizens working to change the world in their own community.



*Founders Fellowship 2017 photos*







# Teacher Programs

“You have had a tremendous impact on my career, and I have met some great people through your professional development. You have also greatly impacted my students because with your curricula I am able to provide them with a better understanding of what the Constitution and The Bill of Rights mean in their everyday lives.”

Victor Harris  
Teacher,  
Sycamore Junior High School  
Cincinnati, Ohio

The Bill of Rights Institute recognizes that the path to a free society begins in the classroom by developing cutting-edge educational resources and professional development programs for educators. The Institute currently has a network of over 50,000 educators—one in four of America’s secondary school teachers in American civics, history and government. Through a wealth of online resources, professional development seminars, effective digital textbooks and lesson plans delivered straight to teachers inbox—at no cost—we continue to empower educators to reach a new generation with lasting constitutional thought.

## Founder’s Fellowship

Our annual flagship professional development program brings teachers together from across the country to explore educational resources, share best practices and discuss critical issues that students bring up in class. Engaging with various scholars and master teachers and visiting places of historic significance with peers, educators leave with the tools and knowledge necessary to successfully engage their students with constitutional principles.

5.3 million

*unique page views throughout  
all Institute websites, 2016*



Constitutional Seminars

These one-day professional development seminars for teachers are held throughout the country and have engaged some 24,000 educators since the Institute’s founding. At each program, teachers engage with in-depth lectures by a highly regarded constitutional scholar and receive BRI resources including primary source documents, lessons plans, eLessons, and more.

Free Lesson Plans

Delivered twice a month directly to teachers’ inboxes, our free eLesson newsletters include historical content, connections to modern life, classroom activities, downloadable PDFs, answer keys, discussion questions, and suggestions for further reading. These lessons, as well as links to our new Homework Help video series on landmark Supreme Court cases, help teachers connect America’s founding principles to students’ lives.

Our network grew 43 percent in 2016!

Documents of Freedom

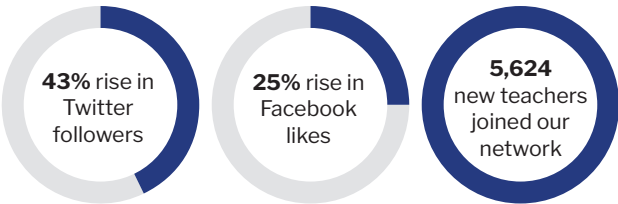
The Institute’s free digital textbook brings students a principle-based education on topics of civil and economic liberty. All told, nearly 290,000 unique individuals, including 15,000 registered teachers, have availed themselves of this resource which a double-blind study of the resource’s efficacy found a 20 percentage point gain in knowledge of constitutional principles over those who do not use the resource.

Voices of History

A free web-based resource bank featuring lesson plans and primary source content developed by the Institute for educators in our network of over 50,000 and beyond. Voices maintains a regular user base of 5,000 individual educators and had over 44,000 unique page views in 2016 alone.

New-to-Service Teachers

These educators are a critical target market to en-sure that our materials, programs, and resources reach educators in their first years of service so that the Institute and our resources become a natural part of their educator preparation. The Institute now has 873 self-identified new-to-service educators receiving our materials on a regular basis and we are further engaging these teachers to build out our network through referrals and support in career growth and professional development.



1 out of 4

*of the nation’s history, government, and  
social studies teachers are in our network*



# Scholar Spotlight

*Joseph Postell*

**How did you first become involved with the Bill of Rights Institute?**

I knew of the excellent educational resources of the Bill of Rights Institute years before I became directly involved because I used them in my own classes and class preparation, but I first became involved with BRI when I was invited to present on the question of civic virtue and the American Constitution. I was then invited to help build a curriculum on Congress: The First Branch, which is my real passion.



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

The Bill of Rights Institute serves a unique and important purpose. It helps teachers think more deeply about our Constitution, teach more effectively about it, and as a result it performs an important objective: to improve the civic knowledge and literacy of future generations of American citizens. Without this civic literacy we cannot sustain this republic or ensure that the blessings of liberty are enjoyed in the future. It is that critical mission that makes me committed to my involvement with BRI.

**What Institute programs have you been involved with?**

I have been a presenter for the BRI curricula on civic virtue and Congress, and I have also helped advise the Institute during the development of the curriculum on Congress.

**What are the highlights of your experiences with the Bill of Rights Institute?**

The seminar in Kansas City where we discussed the Congress curriculum for the first time was a joy. The teachers were thinking at such a high level, the conversation was lively and fun, and we really got into the material. That was definitely a highlight. Also, I really enjoy spending time with the BRI fellows themselves before and after the seminars, where we talk about American history and government.

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

The curricula that the Institute develops are exceptionally good. They help teachers integrate primary sources into the classroom while providing teachers with lesson plans, activities, and other resources to enhance student learning. These resources really distinguish BRI’s work from other organizations.

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

In the past, we could rely on schools and on families to impart the lessons of American history and civics to our children. That has changed dramatically and rapidly. Teachers are increasingly under-equipped to do this work. Regardless of their level of devotion, they often lack time and freedom to teach the right way. But if future generations lack an understanding of the basic principles of our Constitution, and why our Constitution has been so successful and

beneficial, they will be much less likely to defend it from attack. We already see this erosion of faith in our Constitution taking root, and it has undermined civil discourse and confidence in our political institutions while causing a decline in our civic virtues like self-restraint, charity, and humility. That is why it is so critical for BRI to support a constitutional culture and the virtues that culture promotes.

**What is the greatest threat to our liberty if students don't understand constitutional principles?**

We often think that threats to liberty come in the form of totalitarian, suppressive rule. That is the form we most often see it in around the world. But the greatest threats to liberty in America come in the form of public apathy, distrust, and lack of respect for others. We are the ones who make our government what it is, and for that very reason it is critical for us to promote responsible self-government.

**How does the Institute fill this need?**

The Institute avoids white-washing American history, and refrains from a one-sided approach to important subjects like civic virtue. I think that it is effective for that very reason. By gathering such a wide variety of teachers from so many different perspectives, BRI reaches a massive number of young people. And instead of



promoting indoctrination, it equips teachers to challenge students in myriad ways. Students taught by a teacher who has been affected by the Bill of Rights Institute will not only learn how to think for themselves, but will also gain a great appreciation for the core principles upon which our country was founded. In that sense the Institute strikes a critical and important balance.

**How does the Institute help light the fire for liberty in students and teachers?**

Sometimes a teacher needs a break from the mundane more than anything, as well as an opportunity to re-engage intellectually. The Institute provides both. Teachers get to explore ideas they may not have considered, while engaged with a scholar and other teachers. This re-ignites their interest in their craft and reminds them of how rewarding it is to learn. Teachers also get practical assistance in the form of curric-

ula they can use to develop their own classes. Instead of starting a unit from scratch, they can incorporate lessons that have been tested and taught many times. In an era of overworked teachers, this curricular support helps teachers and students focus on what is important: American history and civics.

**Why is this important?**

The most effective teachers not only know their subject—although that is the most fundamental feature of great teaching—but also bring tremendous energy to their lessons. If a teacher is not excited about a subject, how could a student be? And that energy and affection is bolstered by the work of the Institute. Simply put, thanks to the work of the Institute, more teachers have an understanding of our Founding principles and American history, and are better able to encourage their students to study and defend their country's Constitution.



# Parent Spotlight

*Marianne Fogelson*



When Marianne Fogelson had concerns about a social studies assignment her son brought home from school, she requested a meeting with her son’s teacher and the assistant principal, which led to a productive dialogue about the quality of the history and civics resources available to secondary social studies instructors, even at some of the best public schools in the country.

As Marianne describes it, “it was a few months later that I was introduced to David Bobb, President of the Bill of Rights Institute, and became aware of the many resources they have available to students and teachers.”

BRI has realized that educators are not the only ones looking for quality resources and opportunities for their students. Through our parent outreach initiatives we are discovering that parents, too, are looking for the kinds of materials we offer as they seek to support the important work their children’s teachers are doing in the classroom. This is why we are expanding our parent outreach so that, like Marianne, more parents know that their children have a trusted place to go to supplement their work and give them courage in the classroom.

“If you are a parent,” says Marianne, “who finds yourself teaching your children history early on, or if you go to historic landmarks instead of amusement parks, you are doing it right! You have a friend and resource in the Bill of Rights Institute, as they are a treasure trove of information and learning opportunities for all the students and teachers in your life.”

**According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress exam on civics, more than half of American 8th graders believe that the purpose of government is to provide people jobs. Overall, on that same test less than a quarter of 8th and 12th graders demonstrated basic proficiency in civics and American history.**

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# Alumni Spotlight

## *Joshua Bogen*

Our annual summer program brings students together from across the country to Washington, D.C., where participants deeply engage in issues of American politics, government, and constitutional history with leading scholars and policy makers. During their week in the nation’s capital, students also deepen their professional network and visit places of historic significance.

Joshua Bogen is an alumnus of Constitutional Academy 2015 and is currently a freshman at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California. He is active in his community and participates in extracurricular activities such as teaching Hebrew and Judaica, and playing varsity baseball. Since participating in Constitutional Academy Josh has remained in contact with many of his colleagues, and continues to engage in ongoing discourse and friendly debate with them.

Although he does have a passion for politics, Joshua is still in the process of figuring out what he would like to do in life. “Whatever I decide to do, my only goal is to help the world as much as I possibly can. To me, a person’s purpose on this planet is to leave it better than they found it.”



**“During the Academy I spent most of my time talking to those I disagreed with, because I realized that I could learn more from those with whom I disagreed than I would in an entire year of high school government class.”**

**–Josh Bogen**



# Looking Ahead

## *Civic Virtue*

### APUSH

The Advanced Placement U.S. History (APUSH) exam is taken by nearly half a million high school students each year. In partnership with OpenStax, a leading open education resource provider out of Rice University, the Institute will publish an APUSH digital resource in 2019.

The high cost of textbooks is the biggest barrier to more schools offering Advanced Placement U.S. History courses. Furthermore, the expensive textbooks that schools adopt are often ideologically unbalanced—and boring. They fail to present viewpoint diversity, capture the "story" of American history, and excite the wonder in students that comes from thinking historically.

The Bill of Rights Institute engages a quarter of the nation's secondary school teachers in history and social studies, and OpenStax resources are currently being used in 33 percent of all colleges and universities in the U.S. This makes both organizations well positioned to enter the AP U.S. History marketplace. By bringing together creative content and cutting edge technology, this project will have an immediate impact in the 12,500 classrooms across the country in which these courses are offered.

### The MyImpact Challenge

The MyImpact Challenge, a citizenship project of the Bill of Rights Institute, is a pilot project for the 2017-2018 school year. It will feature a curriculum, online platform, contest, and fair that will foster in students a robust under-

standing of the role of the citizen in civil society. Through a new curriculum developed by BRI, students will explore the pillars of citizenship: entrepreneur-ship, charity, and government. This curriculum will be developed with multiple implementations in mind, including classrooms, after school programs, and social clubs.

With guided resources and rubrics, students will write a research report on the impacts of these different efforts. Part two of the MyImpact Challenge supports students as they use that knowledge to develop and implement a project that provides a solution to a problem in one of their communities. Lastly, students will present their project at a Citizenship Fair to community leaders, with prizes being awarded in multiple categories.

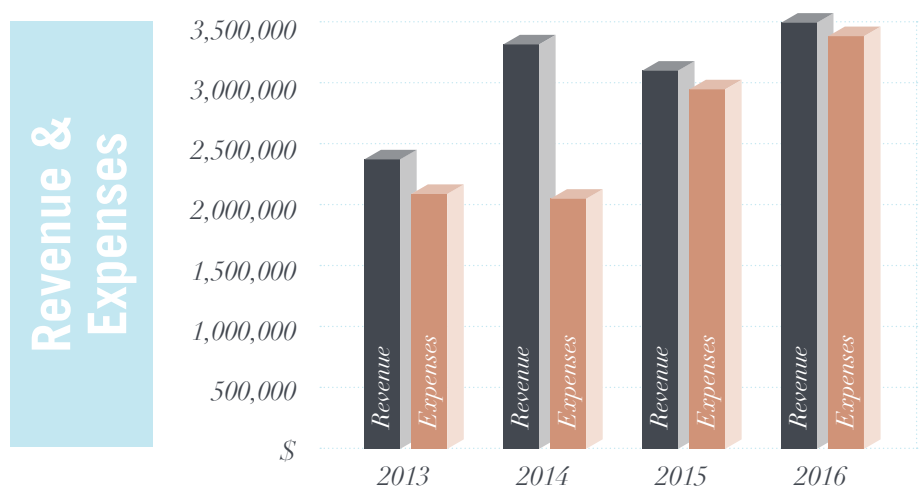
**Year One:** Through our network of partner schools, we plan to pilot this program with five schools across the country. The pilot will offer two options, a semester-long after-school program and a full-year program. Most of the pilot schools have already been signed up; they are eager to implement. Students will upload a portfolio of their work to an online platform, where judges, and the public, can comment and vote based on the rubric criteria. Projects will be assessed based on how they promote the flourishing of civil society, i.e., a project that seeks the expansion of government at the expense of liberty will not be deemed successful. Students will also be entered for a school-wide contest where they are eligible for cash scholarships in several categories.





# Financials

## Revenue and expenses



REVENUE	2013	2014	2015	2016 <sup>1</sup>
Contributions and grants	\$2,201,772	\$3,127,963	\$2,620,823	\$3,141,605
Sales and other	\$166,954	\$192,085	\$227,116	\$77,741
In-kind donations	\$3,000	\$89,254	\$263,921	\$255,222
Total revenue	\$2,371,726	\$3,409,302	\$3,111,860	\$3,474,568
EXPENSES				
Programs	\$1,507,326	\$1,393,894	\$1,965,734	\$2,094,976
Fundraising	\$1412,700	\$516,010	\$622,395	\$451,477
Management/general	\$171,365	\$256,382	\$425,039	\$832,654
Total expenses	\$2,091,391	\$2,166,286	\$3,013,168	\$3,379,107
REVENUE - EXPENSES	\$280,335	\$1,243,016	\$98,692	\$95,461

1 — FY 2016 numbers pending audit

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# Foundation Partnerships

*Listed below are just a few of the many foundations whose generosity makes the work of the Bill of Rights Institute possible.  
We would like to thank them and all of our donors for their ongoing support.*

- Allegheny Foundation**
- Fred and Mary Koch Foundation**
- Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation**
- Albert & Ethel Herzstein Foundation**
- Armstrong Foundation**
- Charles Koch Foundation**
- Georgia Pacific**
- The Achelis & Bodman Foundation**
- F.M. Kirby Foundation**
- Abell-Hanger Foundation**
- Helen Greathouse Charitable Trust**
- Strake Foundation**
- Triad Foundation**
- Anschutz Foundation**
- Edward T. Bedford Foundation**
- Gordon Cain Foundation**
- Daniels Fund**



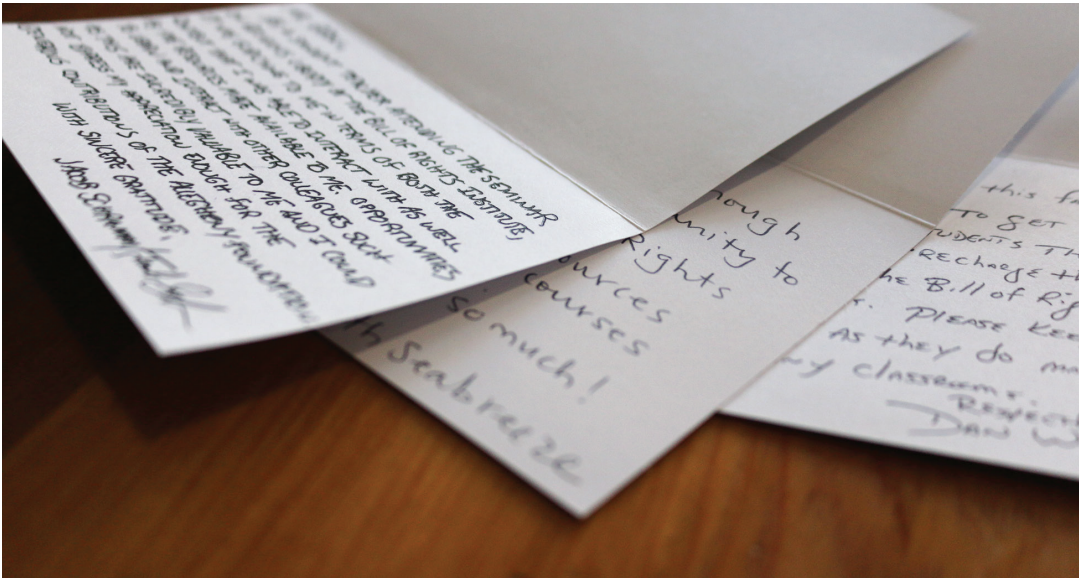
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# Thank You

*From our Teachers  
and Students*

“Bill of Rights Institute treats the teachers it works with in a first class way. They provide for us in so many ways, whether it be providing travel reimbursement to attend seminars, nice hotels, or the high quality of the seminars themselves. That means a lot to teachers like me. I teach at a school where 90 percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch, and we do not often get these kinds of opportunities.”

**Ed Morales**  
**Wichita North High School**  
**Wichita, Kansas**



“Too many people don’t understand the Constitution...The Bill of Rights Institute’s seminars help keep me fresh, motivate me, and give me new ideas on how to present information to students that will both keep their interest and make them better citizens.”

**Theresa Annesser**  
**Citrus High School**  
**Fontana, California**

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“The education staff at The Bill of Rights Institute were teachers themselves, so they understand completely what we need to go through to teach civics and the Founding Principles to teenagers today.”

**Sean Redmond**  
**Seantiago High School**  
**Garden Grove, California**

“I teach adjudicated youth at a private school, The Ace Academy, in Cranston Rhode Island. I have used several of Bill of Rights Institute’s curricula multiple times with my students. The material is engaging for my students, and as a result they are more motivated and more likely to remember what we do. I actually see smiles on their faces because they are participating in their own learning and not just sitting on the sidelines. When I see the light bulb go on over their heads, and I realize they actually want to be in my classroom, it’s amazing.”

**Adam Aquilante**  
**The Ace Academy**  
**Cranston, Rhode Island**

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“Bill of Rights Institute changed my life. From the amazing lifelong friends that I met, to the knowledge that was gained...Thank you BRI and all of the great staff! God Bless!”

**Clay, 2017 Constitutional Academy participant**