

Annual Report 2020



**BILL of RIGHTS
INSTITUTE**

New in 2020!

Bill of Rights Institute's **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.

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.



“As I’m sure you know, teaching free speech is a daunting task, but the webinars you guys provide and the lessons you create and share give us the resources we need to do our job in the classroom. This year, in particular, I feel like I literally couldn’t do it without you.”

Lara B., Arkansas Teacher

**BILL of RIGHTS
INSTITUTE**

billofrightsinstitute.org

President's LETTER

Because of your support, 2020 was a strong year for BRI. Though the COVID-19 pandemic hindered our in-person professional development programs, by year's end nearly 6 million users had accessed our website, a 40% increase over 2019.

When COVID padlocked school doors in March, driving education online, we were immediately able to meet the needs of teachers and students nationwide, regardless of their physical location. The shift to online learning revealed the strength of our direct-to-user business model, the loyalty of our teacher consumers, and the power of personalized learning. We are grateful for your generous support, which enabled us to build the infrastructure needed for best-in-class digital learning, including both personnel, programs, and a strong digital presence.

A key 2020 achievement was the publication, in July, of *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: A History of the American Experiment*. *Life, Liberty...* is the first free digital Advanced Placement resource approved by the College Board, but it is suitable for use in any high school U.S. History class. Developed in partnership with Rice University's OpenStax, this "digital textbook" provides an adaptive, customizable learning experience. Its point-counterpoint approach and emphasis on viewpoint diversity invite critical thinking and pave the way for sorely needed civil discourse.

Other highlights of 2020 included:

- **An important digital upgrade.** On December 15, 2020, Bill of Rights Day, BRI launched a completely new digital platform. For the first time, all 4,000 of our digital resources, including videos, were accessible in the same place, where a powerful new search feature and innovative playlisting functionality allow our users to customize the content they need.
- **A Constitution Day triumph.** On September 17, Constitution Day 2020, BRI offered four hours of live programming on YouTube. Teachers Zoomed in and the program drew more than 52,000 students, outpacing

competing programming that featured Supreme Court justices, and yielding more than three times our viewership from Constitution Day 2019.



- **Explosive growth on YouTube.** Our YouTube traffic in 2020 more than doubled that of 2019, with more than 1.3 million views of our educational videos, and almost 80,000 viewing hours, our all-time high. Our YouTube channel now has more than 17,000 subscribers and a handful of our videos are the #1 hit in the YouTube search bar.
- **Pocket Constitutions for teachers and students.** Because BRI works directly with teachers, even with many schools closed we continued to distribute pocket copies of the Constitution—more than 175,000 in 2020 alone.

BRI greatly appreciates the generous donors who have supported us over the years, and enabled our revenue to grow at a compounded annual rate of 13.4% since 2014. In 2020 alone, more than 5,000 donors, including some 30 foundations, joined you in investing in our work.

We are committed to ensuring that the great Founding ideals of our nation continue to be taught to the rising generation of Americans. Without your support, we would not be able to do so. We are humbled and grateful that you have trusted us with this task.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David J. Bobb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "D" and "B".

David Bobb, President
Bill of Rights Institute

Educator SPOTLIGHT

Jessica Culver is currently in her 16th year of teaching at Ozark High School in Ozark, Arkansas, and she is loving her job and her students. In 2020 she taught U.S. History since 1890 to 11th graders as well as concurrent college credit world history to 11th and 12th graders.

She was also a proud member of BRI's Teacher Advisory Council for the 2019-2020 school year.

Jessica's undergraduate degree is in history and her two graduate degrees are in the fields of history and library media, all from Arkansas Tech University. She is a Donors Choose Teacher Ambassador, a National Master Educator with Take Charge Today, and a Bessie B. Moore award winner for excellence in economics education.

One of her proudest achievements came in the fall of 2016 when she and five students won a trip to Washington, DC, with Envision's Chase the Race Inauguration Contest. Students met General Colin Powell and also heard from Nobel Prize Winner Malala Yousafzai and her father Ziauddin Yousafzai, among others.

Jessica says her biggest challenge is teaching all of her curricula in one school year. One of the ways she overcomes this challenge is by engaging her students through a variety of media. "Depending on the day, you might find my history classroom using artwork, music, podcasts, artifacts, or listening to guest speakers."

To support talented, committed teachers like Jessica, BRI ensures its educational content is available in a variety of media, including video, audio, print and more.



Jessica Culver, Teacher
Ozark High School • Ozark, Arkansas

And Jessica's favorite unit to teach? "I absolutely love teaching about the suffrage movement. I use the teaching of the 19th Amendment to encourage students to become civically active and involved members of society who understand the fight of historical figures to provide us with the right to vote."



Educator

PROGRAM & RESOURCES

New Resource: *Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness*

In the summer of 2020, BRI released a new, free U.S. History digital resource, *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: A History of the American Experiment*. This high-quality, digital curriculum is based on compelling stories that bring American history to life. It encourages civil discourse and critical thinking among young people.

The curriculum was created by BRI with OpenStax Tutor, a research-based learning platform from Rice University that has saved students nearly a billion dollars in textbook expenses. *Life, Liberty...* is the first free, comprehensive open educational resource aligned to the College Board's Advanced Placement U.S. History (APUSH) standards. It contains contributions from 96 scholars from across the nation. By the end of 2020, 7,278 teachers had already signed up to use the resource in their classrooms

Expanded YouTube Content

To help students stay engaged during quarantines, we launched "BRiGht & Early," a new web series for students! Each 20-minute episode was designed to provide historical

"I wanted to say that you have done an outstanding job creating a useful resource for teachers [with *Life, Liberty...*]! It is refreshing to see a resource that is centered on historical inquiry instead of [simply] a narrative of historical events!"

Lisa Valentine, Teacher
Mooresville, North Carolina

context, anchors, primary source discussions, and activities for students to do from home. We also launched three new series: "Scholar Talks," in-depth interviews with notable scholars in the fields of U.S. history and government, "Primary Close Read" videos, a series that examines some of the pivotal speeches and documents from U.S. history, and "BRiDge from the Past," a series



Educator

PROGRAM & RESOURCES continued

“This has been an awesome experience. Content that is usable in the classroom and free to use... along with engaging presentations have made this a rewarding use of my time this summer. I would have never been able to travel even without the shut down due to COVID, so I am grateful for the opportunity!”

Melissa Seiwert, 2020 Summer Institute Teacher,
Wichita, Kansas

for students that explores an important historic image every episode to gain insights into the culture, politics, and society of a particular time in U.S. history. These and other new programs including our “Teacher Time” webinar focused on pedagogical series pushed our 2020 YouTube engagement numbers to 16,150 subscribers and over 1.4 million views.”

2020 Virtual Summer Institute

BRI’s annual summer program for teachers was entirely virtual in 2020. We focused on maintaining the foundational elements participants and supporters wanted, while implementing enhancements that produced a richer, more lasting impact. The scheduling moved from an intense five days to being spread out over two weeks. This meant higher-touch contact before and after the

event. Plus, participants had more time to reflect on and utilize what they had learned.

The 47 Virtual Summer Institute participants were asked to raise and respond to issues on the subject of “Justice and the Judicial Branch,” share insights, and enhance their experiences as learners.

Bill of Rights Institute Resources Website

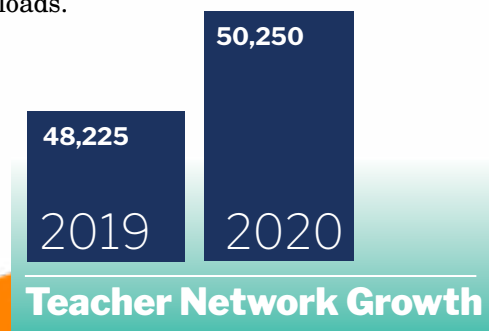
This is a free digital storehouse of our lesson plans and primary source content developed for our network of more than 49,000 educators. The site’s regular user base expanded to a monthly average of 8,852 educators in 2020 (up from 6,343 in 2019) and the site had nearly 250,000 unique page views this year (up from 155,000 in 2019).

Documents of Freedom

The Institute’s free digital U.S. History, Government and Economics textbook continued to be our most popular resource in 2020. It received more than 400,000 unique page views in 2020, with more than 16,000 educators signed up as regular users of the material.

FaBRIc of History Podcast

In March of 2020, the Bill of Rights Institute launched a podcast for teachers and civics and history buffs called “FaBRIc of History.” The podcast weaves together U.S. history, Founding Principles, and what all of this means to us today. Each episode, Mary, Gary, and Eryn delve into the most controversial, inspirational, and hilarious moments of history and strive to find the common thread between them. In its 2020 inaugural year, the podcast had 3,752 downloads.



Student SPOTLIGHT

The grand prize winner of the 2020 We the Students Essay Contest was Derek Jiang, a rising senior at Stephen F. Austin High School in Sugar Land, Texas. The essay prompt this year was, “What does civil discourse mean to you?” Derek wrote about former Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia, who developed a respectful friendship despite holding very different views. Here is a particularly poignant excerpt from Derek’s essay:

When asked on 60 Minutes how he and Ginsburg got along so well, Justice Antonin Scalia replied, “I attack ideas. I don’t attack people.” That is the cornerstone of proper civil discourse—the exchange of ideas without personal attacks. It is building bridges between people to understand each other, not burning them down. It is neither side actively trying to “win” yet both sides coming out as winners. It is exercising our freedom of thought and speech to educate others. It is listening, respecting, and caring for our fellow citizens. It is creating a more diverse and inclusive democracy where every citizen’s voice is heard. It is making sure our government institutions work for all Americans through a system of separation



Derek Jiang
2020 We the Students Essay Contest Winner
Laredo, Texas

of powers and checks and balances that facilitates cooperation and compromise, regardless of how polarized we are. It is Scalia and Ginsburg becoming best friends, not in spite of their differences, but because of them.

To Read Derek’s entire essay, please visit **mybri.org/wethestudentscontest**



Student PROGRAMS

My Impact Challenge

MyImpact Challenge is a citizenship project of the Bill of Rights Institute designed to foster a robust understanding of the meaning of citizenship in civil society through a guided curriculum, a project, and a citizenship fair. The program is designed to help students explore the three pillars of citizenship—Government, Entrepreneurship, and Charity—and develop projects that will positively impact their communities. Then, they implement their projects and present their impact to community leaders. The program was 100% online and led by BRI staff in 2020 and was successfully implemented by the students of the 2020 Virtual Constitution Academy.

Virtual Constitutional Academy 2020

In the summer of 2020, amidst the challenges of a global pandemic, a vibrant group of 35 young people came together to create an impact in their communities. Unlike prior Constitutional Academies – which have tended to last 6 days in person - the full program for the 2020 Virtual Summer Institute was rooted in the

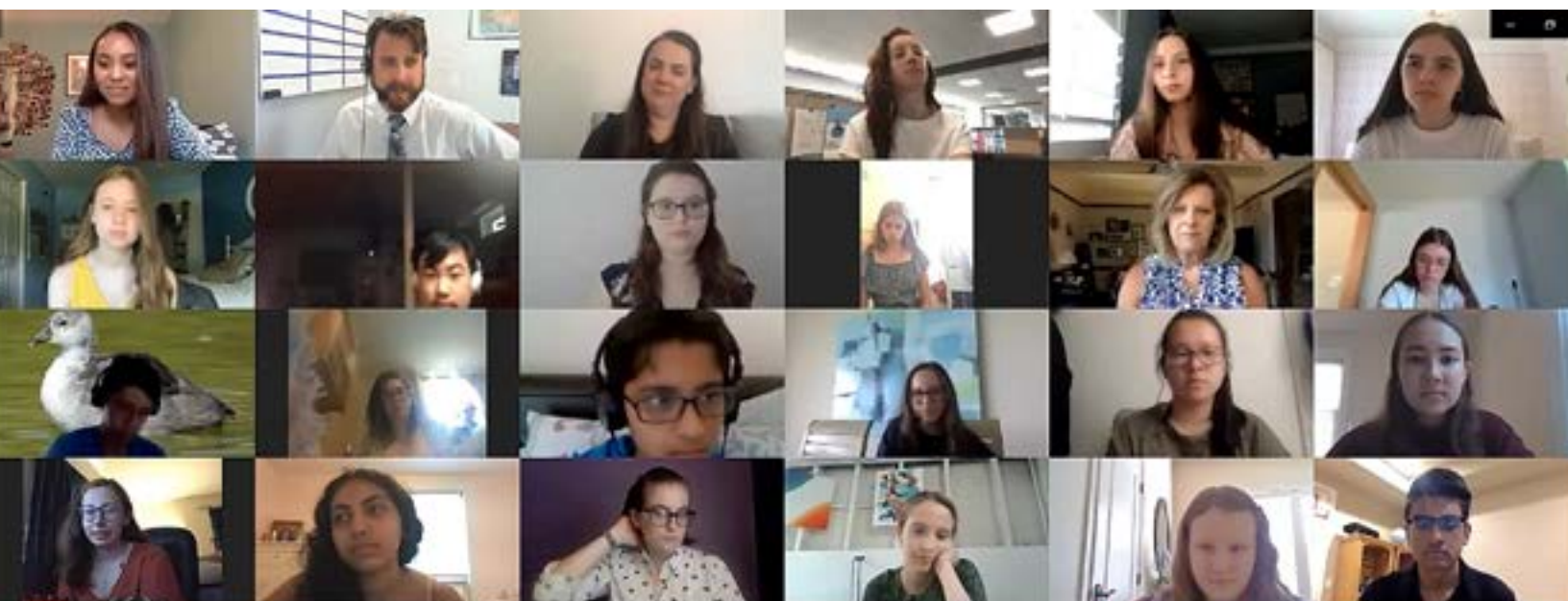
MyImpact Challenge curriculum, and had synchronous and asynchronous parts that spanned months, with the core being its one week of online engagement July 6-10. After the summer workshop, nearly 20 students committed to carrying their projects into the school year.

We the Students Essay Contest

The 2020 essay contest had nearly 6,000 essays submitted. The topic this year was: What does civil discourse mean to you? The Institute awarded \$20,000 in scholarships to fourteen students, including a \$5,000 grand prize to Derek Jiang from Stephen F. Austin High School in Sugar Land, Texas.

ThinktheVote.com

This website allows students to learn all sides of a variety of current events issues and engage in online civil debate with other students from across the country. The Think the Vote website garnered nearly 180,000 unique pageviews in 2020 and averaged more than 9,000 monthly users.



Student **PROGRAMS** continued

AP Prep Webinars

Our free annual AP preparation webinars continued in 2020 with episodes for AP Government, AP U.S. History, and a new series on AP Preparedness. Hosted by Tom Richey and Paul Sargent, the series of 30 webinars took place in the two weeks leading up to the AP U.S. History and AP Government exams (end of April/beginning of May). The webinars and their recordings garnered 55,624 total views on YouTube.

Homework Help Videos

During 2020, the Bill of Rights Institute released three different series of videos: Curriculum Support, Supreme Court, and Principles and Virtues. The first series focused on the history of female suffrage and serves as a supplement to the Votes for Women curriculum. The second series featured five videos on landmark Supreme Court cases, most of which are required for the AP Government test. The final series focused on constitutional principles, specifically federalism, the Electoral College, and Incorporation.



Financials

REVENUE

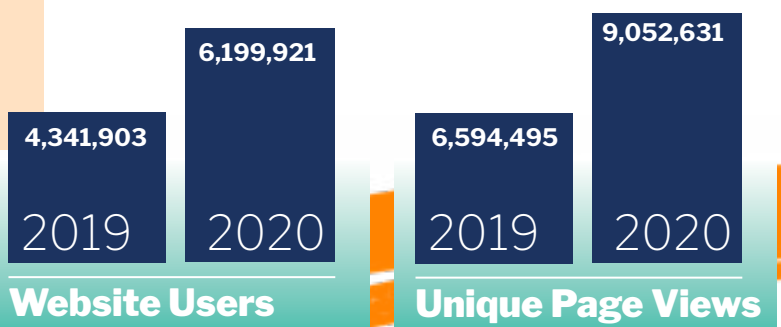
	2019	2020
Contributions and Grants	\$5,742,978	\$6,769,684
Sales and Other	\$7,444	\$10,895
In-Kind Donations	\$359,984	\$273,117
Total Revenue	\$6,110,406	\$7,053,696

EXPENSES

Programs	\$3,025,549	\$4,224,259
Fundraising	\$1,119,128	\$1,078,458
Management/General	\$1,501,364	\$1,679,818
Total Expenses	\$5,646,042	\$6,982,535
Revenue Less Expenses	\$464,364	\$71,161

“My understanding of civic virtue has grown exponentially during Constitutional Academy, and I intend to wield it in all future public service endeavors. My gratitude for the environment that facilitated this growth is immeasurable. Thank you to the BRI staff for planning and executing a week of lessons to get our flywheels spinning. I am confident that the end of the week was not the end of its impact.”

Bethany Jablon
2020 Constitutional Academy Student
 Oviedo, Florida



Thank You 2020

Listed below are just a few of the many foundations whose generosity make 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

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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



“I am so grateful for the Virtual Summer Institute this year! In just a few days I have gained hundreds of ideas and resources that I am looking forward to implementing into the classroom in the fall... It was comforting and helpful to know that educators are universally in the same situation with the same concerns for our students.”

Kimberly Huffman
2020 Summer Institute Teacher
Smithville, Ohio