

## **New Scholarship Contest Asks Students: What is Citizenship Today?**

*“We the Students” essay contest to award more than \$20,000 in scholarships to the winners.*

**Arlington, VA, September 17, 2018** – In celebration of the 231st anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on Monday, September 17, the Bill of Rights Institute (BRI), a leading voice educating young people about U.S. history and our founding principles, will challenge students to define 21<sup>st</sup> century citizenship in its annual “We the Students” essay contest.

The question that students will be asked to address is: “What are essential qualities of a citizen in your community in 21st century America?” This question invites students to make their scholarship essay personal. This year’s contest encourages young people to expand their understanding of citizenship, envisioning it not as an abstract concept, but as knowledge and actions inspired by our nation’s founding principles.

“In a polarized political climate, it’s especially vital that students learn the habits and skills of deliberation,” said David Bobb, president of the Bill of Rights Institute. “Our core mission is to engage students in this practice, so that they can own the principles of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution as their own, and apply them in the service of innovation and progress.”

The contest will also expand on the 28,000 students it engaged last year, including some 6,000 completed essays, while offering scholarship awards of over \$20,000 to the contest winners. BRI will be accepting submissions from Monday, September 17, Constitution Day, through February 14, 2019.

“We want to empower students to be courageous in solving the most pressing problems facing our society. This means inviting students to take up controversial topics and to be open to different points of view,” Bobb continued. “Free expression and civil discourse are each essential to driving innovation and progress in society. This contest enables students to join this effort.”

Established in September 1999, the Bill of Rights Institute is a non-profit educational organization that works to engage, educate, and empower individuals with a passion for the freedom and opportunity that exist in a free society. The Institute develops educational resources and programs for a network of more than 50,000 educators and 100,000 students nationwide.

**To learn more about the Bill of Rights Institute and the “We the Students” essay contest, please contact Chris Janson at [cjanson@BillOfRightsInstitute.Org](mailto:cjanson@BillOfRightsInstitute.Org) or 703.662.9871.**