



# BILL of RIGHTS INSTITUTE

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





## Mission

The Bill of Rights Institute teaches civics. We equip students and teachers to live the ideals of a free and just society.

## Vision

The Bill of Rights Institute seeks an America where we more perfectly realize the promise of liberty and equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence. This calls for civic education that helps students examine the story of our country and exercise the skills of citizenship.



There is no doubt that 2021 provided a powerful validation of the work we do each day at the Bill of Rights Institute—work that is made possible through your support.

As schools grappled with challenges such as shifting pandemic protocols, mass substitute teacher shortages,

and concerns about student learning loss, it was clear that teachers and students needed our support more than ever.

And as we saw throughout 2021, there is a true hunger among teachers and students for the support the Bill of Rights Institute gives them.

During the 2021 calendar year, we added more than 8,000 teachers to our growing network, which now includes nearly 30% of all middle school and high school civics and history teachers in the United States.

Students and teachers collectively spent nearly 1 million hours using Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, our free, digital U.S. history resource.

We distributed more than 300,000 pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution, to help teachers put the Founding principles of justice and liberty in students hands.

And we conducted more than 25 in-person professional development programs around the country, while expanding our e-learning program that allows teachers to receive professional development anytime, anywhere, and at their own pace.

This is what makes the Bill of Rights Institute truly unique—through our direct outreach model, we meet teachers and students where they are. We put flexible, multi-format resources and opportunities directly into the hands of teachers and students.

Throughout this report, you will receive a detailed look at the resources we offer, our careful financial stewardship, and the real people whose lives and careers are being positively affected by our work.

Teachers and students are depending on the Bill of Rights Institute more than ever. With your help, we will ensure they always have the resources and support they need.

**David Bobb, Ph.D.**

President, Bill of Rights Institute





## Alisha Sanders

Teacher  
Gettysburg Area Middle School  
Gettysburg, PA

Alisha Sanders was very young when she knew she wanted to become a teacher.

“In first grade, I completed a ‘Getting to Know You’ worksheet on which I wrote [that] my goal was to become a teacher,” Alisha remembers. “I was reminded of this when I reached a crossroads on my career path and decided to get certified to teach while working full-time and raising young children.”

A member of BRI’s 2021-2022 teacher advisory council, Alisha has been teaching for 13 years and currently teaches civics and government at Gettysburg Area Middle School in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She has a B.A. in Government and an M.Ed., and her proudest achievement is receiving an award from United Way for helping to develop a service-learning initiative at her school.

Alisha says that some of her favorite BRI resources to use are the primary sources. “They can be linked to articles that are easy to access for online learners,” she points out, “and they help students make connections between the civics content and real-world events.”

So why does Alisha think civics education is so important today?

“I say this sincerely and with urgency: teaching civics today is one of the most important things we can do to save humanity and restore civility,” she said. “As teachers, it is our duty to provide a safe, supportive, and compassionate learning environment as we prepare [students] to become active and engaged citizens.”

## Teachers Love BRI’s Quality and Convenience

**Brett Michael Mills** is a long-time history teacher at St. Thomas High School in Houston. He also serves as a professional development instructor for the Bill of Rights Institute.

So what drew him to BRI? Here’s what Brett had to say:

“BRI uses a wide variety of scholars to create the most current and well-written content...and it is located online and is extremely easy to search for the content you want to use. My personal favorites are the point / counter-point lessons – I use them all of the time in the classroom!”



## How Committed Are Our Teachers? This One Ran a Marathon for a Student



The Bill of Rights Institute works with some of the most dedicated civics and history teachers in the United States.

So just how committed are our teachers? **Tracey Downey**, a BRI professional development instructor who teaches civics in Polk County, FL, once ran a marathon to inspire a student to graduate.

“You always have to remember what we mean to these kids,” Tracey said. “Some of them, when they’re 40 or 50 years old, are going to remember us and what they learned from us.”



To read about Tracey’s inspirational story, just scan the QR code below with your smartphone.

## Market-Leading Professional Development

Despite the continued challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Bill of Rights Institute delivered more than 25 in-person professional development sessions for educators all across the United States.

Busy teachers also need flexibility in their professional development, so BRI continued to expand its e-learning Teacher Badging program. Teachers can now pursue professional development online, at their own pace, and earn digital “badges” for completing programs. BRI currently offers Teacher Badging for its Votes for Women, Teaching the 20th Century, Presidents & the Constitution, and Socratic Pedagogy programs

# 94%

of BRI's professional learning participants would recommend BRI's professional development to a colleague.

## Access to Network of Civics and History Scholars

Through its professional development programs, Fabric of History podcast, and Scholar Talks video series, the Bill of Rights Institute gives educators the chance to learn directly from leading scholars in their fields. During 2021, BRI hosted programming with scholars from Clemson University, George Washington University, Washington & Lee University, and many more esteemed institutions.

## Bill of Rights Institute Resources Website

The Bill of Rights Institute website is a one-stop shop with more than 4,000 civics and history resources. Educators and students can download lessons, primary sources, and plenty more, and even create their own playlists of resources. During the 2021 calendar year, the BRI website delivered more than 7.3 million page views from 4.7 million user visits.

## Documents of Freedom

The Bill of Rights Institute's free digital U.S. History, Government and Economics resource continued to be popular in 2021. The Documents of Freedom site, which includes 9 units and 67 lessons, delivered nearly 250,000 page views from 117,000 user visits.

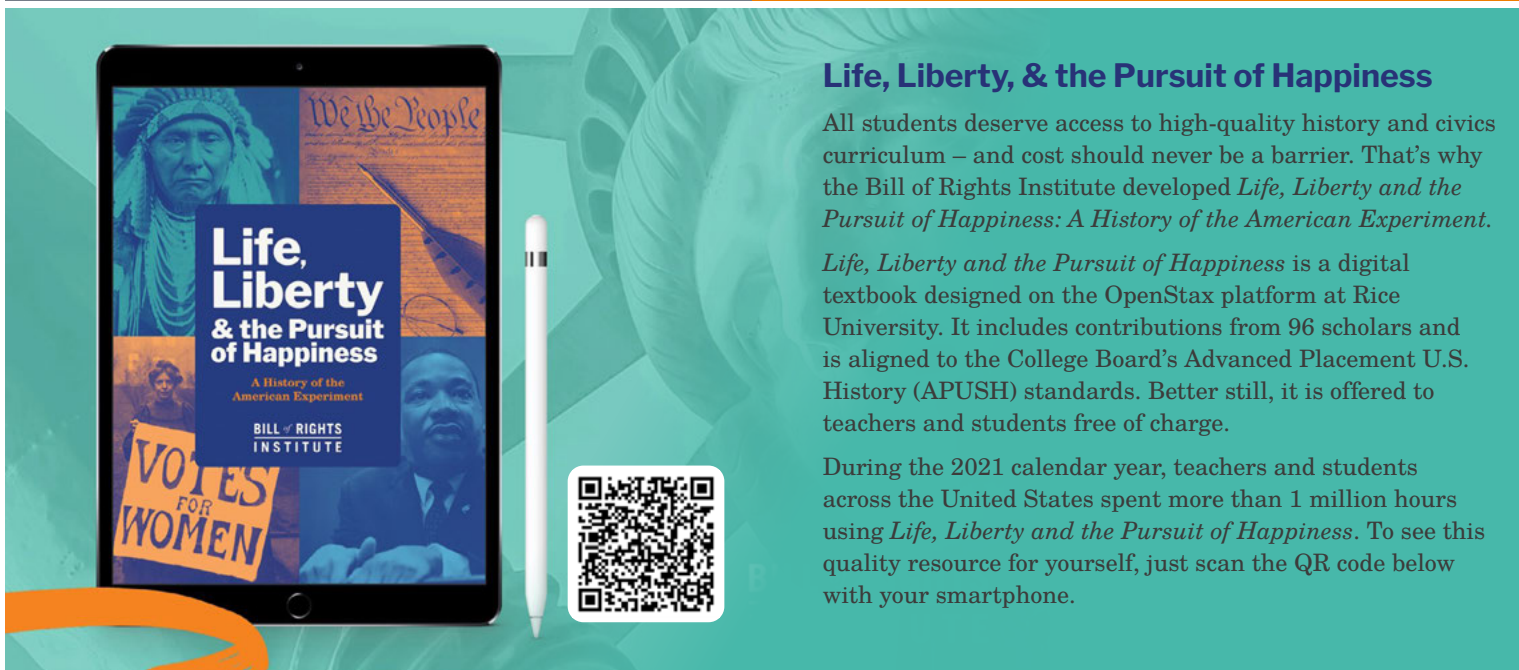
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## Free Classroom Activities

In addition to the resources the Bill of Rights Institute makes available online, we deliver free classroom activities twice a month directly to teachers' inboxes. These activities can include classroom lessons, downloadable PDFs, primary sources for student reading, and more.

## 2021 Summer Institute

The Bill of Rights Institute's annual summer program for teachers returned to an in-person format in 2021. Twenty teachers from across the United States gathered outside of Washington, D.C. for five days of educational programming. The theme for the week was “Justice and the Judicial Branch: Principles and Powers.” **100% of participants said they were likely to use what they learned in their classrooms.**



## Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness

All students deserve access to high-quality history and civics curriculum – and cost should never be a barrier. That's why the Bill of Rights Institute developed *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: A History of the American Experiment*.

*Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness* is a digital textbook designed on the OpenStax platform at Rice University. It includes contributions from 96 scholars and is aligned to the College Board's Advanced Placement U.S. History (APUSH) standards. Better still, it is offered to teachers and students free of charge.

During the 2021 calendar year, teachers and students across the United States spent more than 1 million hours using *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness*. To see this quality resource for yourself, just scan the QR code below with your smartphone.





## Sarah Schleinkofer

2021 We the Students Essay Contest Winner  
Beverly Hills High School, Beverly Hills, CA

## Teachers Love BRI's Quality and Convenience

Sarah Schleinkofer, a member of the class of 2022 at Beverly Hills High School in Beverly Hills, CA, took home the \$7,500 grand prize as the winner of the Bill of Rights Institute's 2021 We the Students Essay Contest.

Students were asked to reflect on the interconnection between justice and equality in today's society. Here is a brief excerpt from Sarah's award-winning essay:

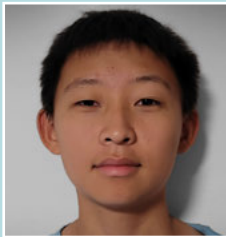
*Justice and equality are inextricably intertwined; one can't exist in the absence of the other.*

*To understand this, we must contemplate what justice is and why it is important to individuals and societies. Justice can be defined in many ways, but fundamentally it can be viewed as a set of principles, guidelines, and foundational law. Plato defined it holistically, as a moral imperative that guides relationships and interactions among people.*

*Societal harmony is advanced by the notion of justice, which promotes a collective sense of fairness and efficiency. Justice imposes upon all a set of rights and duties: in fact, just law protects the natural rights of individuals while simultaneously imposing a duty to obey the law.*

*The more universally individuals within society believe that the rights conveyed justify the duties imposed, the greater the adherence to the law and ultimately the more harmonious society becomes.*

## BRI Think the Vote Champ is Dreaming Big



**Student Angier Lei still has some time before he graduates from Stuyvesant High School in New York City in 2023. But he is already dreaming big.**

**Lei, a member of the school debate team, is considering a career in political or social science. He has also been a**

**contributor (and winner) on the Bill of Rights Institute's Think the Vote platform, where students learn to participate in respectful, informed dialogue around some of the most pressing issues facing America today.**

**Angier is a history buff and even qualified for an international history trivia competition. But you won't find Angier's biggest heroes in the pages of history – his heroes live at home with him.**

**Angier praised his parents for "the difficult sacrifices [they made] for me in the hopes that I would have a better life than they did, and that I would be the first in my family to go to college, the first to get a stable, well-paying job, and the first to live a life where I could achieve my dreams."**

**"When I achieve my dreams in life," added Angier, "I will know that my heroes have also achieved their dreams: a better life for me."**

## Providing Opportunities! Former BRI Essay Winner Lands Book Deals



Alyssa Roat of Arizona was the 2016 winner of the Bill of Rights Institute's We the Students Essay Contest. Now, she's a published author with multiple books under contract.

We caught up with Alyssa and she shared how BRI's essay contest helped her pursue the college writing program of her dreams, and the crucial role a BRI summer program played in her personal development.

"The Bill of Rights Institute's summer program gave me new confidence in myself," she said. "I learned I could step into new situations, hold my own in discourse, and pursue my dreams and goals. The skills I learned have helped me speak to thousands of people from the stage and millions more from the page."



To learn more about Alyssa's story, just scan the QR code below with your smartphone.

## Homework Help Videos

During 2021, the Bill of Rights Institute released a series of Homework Help videos covering Curriculum Support, the Supreme Court, the First Amendment, and Principles and Virtues. The Homework Help series of videos has proven very popular with students, and **BRI now has 11 separate Homework Help videos that have each received more than 100,000 views.**



## AP Prep Webinars

Our free annual AP preparation webinars continued in 2021 with episodes for AP Government, AP U.S. History, and a new series on AP Skills Preparation. The series of webinars took place in the two weeks leading up to the AP U.S. History exam and AP Government exam.

## Think the Vote

This website provides opportunities for students to learn all sides of a current events issue and engage in civil discourse with fellow students from across the country. Throughout 2021, the Think the Vote website garnered more than 171,000 pageviews from more than 101,000 user visits. The Think the Vote website will be getting a fresh new look for the 2022 election cycle.

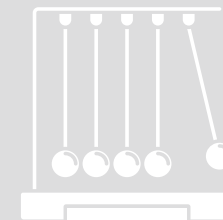


## We the Students Essay Contest

The 2021 essay contest had more than 7,000 essays submitted. Students were asked to reflect on the interconnection between justice and equality. BRI awarded \$20,000 in prizes, and Sarah Schleinkofer from Beverly Hills High School in Beverly Hills, CA, took home the \$7,500 grand prize. To read an excerpt from Sarah's essay, see page 7.

## MyImpact Challenge

In 2021, BRI announced the nationwide launch of MyImpact Challenge, a national civics contest for students. Through MyImpact Challenge, students develop a constitutionally-principled civic engagement project with the goal of developing a robust understanding of citizenship. BRI will be awarding \$40,000 in prizes for students and their teachers, including a \$10,000 grand prize.



## Constitutional Academy 2021

Twenty-one students from around the country gathered at Marymount University in Arlington, VA, in July for BRI's prestigious Constitutional Academy. The 2021 theme was "Equality and Justice – Principles as Foundation." Students discussed America's Founding documents and principles, engaged in discussions on issues like balancing civil rights and public safety, and participated in Socratic seminars. They also had the opportunity to tour Washington, D.C.-area landmarks, including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Portrait Gallery, and more.

# BRI By the Numbers, 2021

**BRI Teacher  
Network (2021)**

**58,000**  
(+8,000)

**Website Usage**

**5 Million**  
user visits...

**7.9 Million**  
page views...

Resulting in

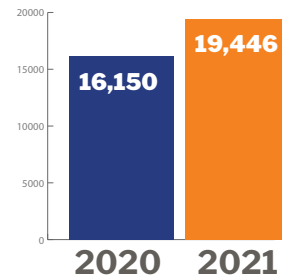
**176,522**  
hours spent on BRI  
web properties

**Social Presence**

**40,643**

followers across  
Facebook, Instagram  
and Twitter

**YouTube  
Subscribers**

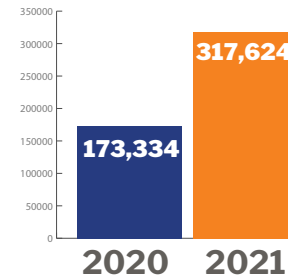


**20.4%**  
growth!

**YouTube  
Total Views**

**1,351,113**

**Pocket  
Constitutions  
Distributed**



**83%**  
growth!

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Statement of Activities

(\$)	2020	2021*
<b>Revenue and grants</b>		
Contributions and grants	6,769,684	9,353,204
Fees		
In-kind contributions	273,117	311,134
Miscellaneous	10,895	9,353,204
Total revenue and support	7,053,696	9,669,086
<b>Expenses</b>		
Education programs	4,224,259	5,635,803
Management and general	1,679,818	976,127
Fundraising	1,078,458	1,671,179
Total expensis	6,982,535	8,283,109
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>		
Net Assets, beginning of year	71,161	1,385,977
Net Assets, end of year	2,667,757	2,738,918
	2,738,918	4,124,895

\*Pending audit committee approval



# What Real Teachers & Students Say About BRI

"Thank you for supporting teachers... Very few groups support education at such a level. You've helped so many teachers better reach their students."

-- Destiny L., Kansas



"Thank you for providing this training workshop! As a Civics & History teacher at a small school, days like these enrich my background and fill my toolkit. Days like these are a rare gift."

-- Sara C., Michigan



"I appreciate the time and energy spent to help me become a more well-rounded teacher and human being. The presentations were interesting and engaging. I will be applying new strategies in my classroom that I learned at this seminar. I highly recommend that all teachers get this opportunity."

-- Robert W., Florida



"These programs, hands down, are the best professional development for teachers."

- Pat B., Massachusetts



"My understanding of civic virtue has grown exponentially during this program, and I intend to wield it in all future public service endeavors."

-- Bethany J., former Constitutional Academy student



"Participating in the Constitutional Academy... allowed me to learn more about what being a good citizen is and the power each American voice has."

-- Amanda C., former Constitutional Academy student





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