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New 'Interactive Constitution' Featured in AP History, Government Curricula

By Benjamin Herold on September 17, 2015 9:51 AM



A new "interactive" version of the U.S. Constitution will be made available to teachers and students, featured in the curricular materials for Advanced Placement History and Government and classes.

The multi-million dollar tool, which allows users to explore constitutional debates through the eyes of legal scholars with a wide range of political perspectives, is a project of the **National Constitution Center**, based in Philadelphia.

"It's exciting to bring together the top liberal, conservative, and libertarian legal scholars in America to explore areas of agreement and disagreement about the text and history of the Constitution, the one document that unites all Americans in these polarized times," said Jeffrey Rosen, the center's president and CEO, in a statement.

The project is funded with a \$5.5 million grant from the **John Templeton Foundation**, which funds research on "big questions" related to science and religion.

The money was used in part to establish an advisory board co-chaired by leaders of the conservative Federalist Society and the liberal American Constitution Society. The board then commissioned legal scholars to write explanations from multiple points of view of the provisions of the Constitution and its amendments.

Users can click on each provision to read "statements from leading scholars across the political and philosophical spectrum about they agree, and disagree, about in [the Constitution's] meaning," according to the statement. Users will also be able to click on sections of the Bill of Rights to get history and context around specific provisions.

The National Constitution Center is partnering with the College Board, the nonprofit that creates and administers the SAT college-entrance exam, as well as Advanced Placement courses offered in thousands of high schools across the country.

As part of the agreement, the College Board has created lesson plans using the Interactive Constitution for its AP U.S. Government and A.P. Comparative Government and Politics courses. A module for AP U.S. History is under development.

In each lesson, students can use the interactive tools to read and analyze founding documents and link directly to an AP theme or learning goal, the statement explains. The modules are meant to serve as a full lesson plan for teachers to use in their classrooms, and to provide example for how the Interactive Constitution can be applied to content and skills in other AP classes.

The modules are available for use beginning this school year. Teachers and students can access the lessons whether or not they participate in the AP program.

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