

BRINGING THE BILL OF RIGHTS TO EVERY STATE CAPITOL

THE BILL OF RIGHTS MONUMENT PROJECT



A class of 5th graders on a field trip to The Bill of Rights Monument at the Arizona Capitol in Phoenix

On December 15, 2012 - Bill of Rights Day - America's first monument celebrating the Bill of Rights was dedicated at the Arizona Capitol in Phoenix. The monument was designed and sculpted by Joseph Kincannon, one of the country's leading stone artisans. It comprises ten individually sculpted limestone amendment monoliths, ranging from 7' - 8 1/2' tall, arrayed along an arcing hilltop just across from the Capitol Complex.

Built to stand for the next 100 years, the Bill of Rights Monument has already become an important destination at the Arizona Capitol, drawing an estimated 40,000 school children annually, and a similar number of other visitors to the Capitol.

This historic project was completed on schedule and at budget, for a total cost of \$500,000. The project's timeline from when the site was formally granted through design development and approval, fabrication and installation was less than 21 months.

OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE DISPLAYS OF THE THE BILL OF RIGHTS IN CIVIC SPACES ACROSS AMERICA, BEGINNING WITH ALL 50 STATE CAPITOLS

We are making important strides toward this goal, building on the successful template developed in Arizona to advance projects at three additional State Capitols, including The Bill of Rights Plaza at the Oklahoma Capitol, which has already completed Design Development phase.

PASSING ON AMERICA'S LEGACY OF LIBERTY

THE BILL OF RIGHTS, the cornerstone of our free society for over 220 years, now stands as the most successful assertion of individual rights and liberties ever written. In a testament to the power of its ideas principles once considered radical, like freedom of expression and belief, the presumption of innocence, due process and equality under the law, are today considered universal human rights. Yet currently the Bill of Rights is barely taught in our schools, and is all but invisible in our public places.

That's why celebrating the Bill of Rights with permanent displays on the grounds of all fifty State Capitols is more than just a symbolic act. Monuments are unique in their capacity to connect us with our heritage and ideals. By showing each new generation what those before them felt was so important that they literally carved it in stone and forged it in metal, monuments make history visible, tangible and ultimately personal.

This is especially true for younger people, which is why we have chosen State Capitols as our primary focus. Every year millions of American school children, along with millions more visitors of all ages, take trips to their State Capitol. For many it's their first encounter with our democratic process. They call on their representatives, watch a legislative session, and tour the building and grounds. What better place to highlight the central role that the freedoms and principles in the Bill of Rights play in our civic life?



8th Amendment monolith, The Bill of Rights Monument

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Local leadership is essential for a successful project. The Bill of Rights Monument Project will only commit to new projects where we've been able to identify a core group of community leaders willing to establish an in-state steering committee to build public support and organize fundraising outreach. Our primary role is to advise and assist this committee through each stage of the monument process, to offer our 501(c) 3 status as a fiscal sponsor when needed, and to provide general criteria on the project's scope and design to ensure that each monument lives up to the aspirations of our national mission.

NONPARTISANSHIP

The process for placing monuments on State Capitol grounds begins with garnering legislative authorization. The Bill of Rights Monument Project requires bipartisan sponsorship for our authorizing resolutions before we'll proceed. This has resulted in unanimous legislative support for each of our resolutions to date.

SITE AND DESIGN

Once we have legislative authorization, The Bill of Rights Monument Project works closely with the local steering committee and any requisite state agencies and commissions to determine the best possible site, and to develop a site-specific design that's both unique and inspiring. Our vision is a national network of landmark monuments located on prominent sites at every Capitol, designed to engage the public in exploring the founding principles of our free society and to encourage discourse among visitors.

PROJECT BUDGETS

In Arizona we demonstrated that a compelling design on a significant scale and fabricated from the highest quality materials can be completed for \$500,000. The Bill of Rights Plaza at the Oklahoma Capitol, budgeted at \$850,000, is far larger in scope, and will be fabricated using the same century-rated limestone as the Arizona monument. While budgets will vary according to the site and design, and ultimately be determined by the local steering committees, we've already established that landmark monuments can be completed for under \$1,000,000.

ESTABLISHING AN ENDOWMENT

The Bill of Rights Monument Project has long envisioned establishing a national matching fund endowment as the best strategy for achieving our mission to bring the Bill of Rights to all fifty State Capitols. It's our firm belief that the completion of one or more of the additional monuments we've already won authorization for will provide the catalyst to launch just such an endowment.

The purpose of the endowment is to seed additional monument efforts to build a matching fund endowment to partner with local organizers, providing matching funds when their efforts reach a series of verified financial benchmarks, from design development through fabrication and installation. Setting \$1,000,000 as the maximum project budget eligible for matching funds, new projects would be eligible to receive up to \$500,000 from the endowment, in addition to our ongoing guidance on successfully navigating the monument process.

A matching fund structured this way would provide a major incentive to community leaders considering undertaking projects in their states, and would also significantly accelerate project timelines. If we use the Oklahoma project's startup costs and top line budget as a baseline, an endowment of \$24 million would be able to provide matching funds for Bill of Rights Monuments at every remaining State Capitol in America.

To put this in perspective, consider that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC cost \$8.4 million in 1982. That is equivalent to \$22.9 million in 2020 dollars. Establishing an endowment in that amount would set the stage to complete our vision of a national network of landmark monuments spanning all fifty of America's State Capitols, spaces where generations of school children will encounter the Bill of Rights in a setting designed to capture their imagination and engage their interest.



Design development illustrations for The Bill of Rights Plaza at the Oklahoma Capitol, which is fully approved

SPONSOR OUR NATIONAL MATCHING FUND OR UNDERWRITE YOUR STATE

If you're a major donor who shares our commitment to restoring the role of our founding principles in our national conversation, the Bill of Rights Monument Project asks for your consideration in partnering with us to establish this matching fund endowment.



CHRIS BLISS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE BILL OF RIGHTS MONUMENT PROJECT

"When I think about the American experiment and the Bill of Rights, I think about the great cathedrals of Europe, and imagine the passion they inspired in the people as they were being built and completed. Then I imagine that point several hundred years later, when they began to fall into disrepair, and began to be viewed by many as expensive relics, no longer relevant to their modern world. When a great building reaches that phase, one of two things happens. It's either restored, or it's torn down to make way for the new.

"I think we've reached that point with the great architecture at the center of our civic life, the Bill of Rights. I'm not one of those alarmists that believes our rights are under attack from hostile forces intent on destroying our way of life. I think the problem is more subtle. Our civic life has fallen into disrepair the same way as those cathedrals did, because of indifference and ignorance. The question is whether we are going to decide to tear it down, or commit to the hard work of restoration.

"Great ideas make a great nation, and the Bill of Rights is one of the greatest ideas in the brief history of human freedom. My hope is that this monument becomes one small step toward the reawakening needed to begin that restoration."

from dedication remarks by Executive Director Chris Bliss
at the Bill of Rights Monument at the Arizona Capitol

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