

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BUILDING MONUMENTS THAT WILL BRING US TOGETHER

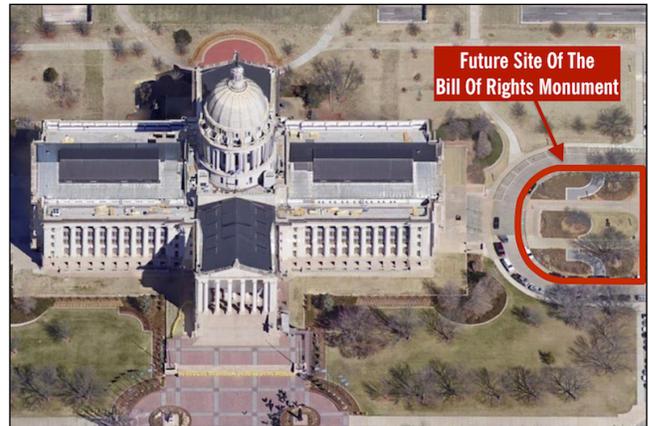
Today is **BILL OF RIGHTS DAY**, the 226th anniversary of when this cornerstone of our free society became part of the Constitution. In a testament to the power of its ideas, principles once considered radical like freedom of expression and belief, the presumption of innocence, due process and equality under the law, are now considered universal human rights. Yet today the **BILL OF RIGHTS** is barely taught in our schools, and all but invisible in our public square.

MYBILLOFRIGHTS.ORG is a 501(c)3 nonprofit created to help fill that void by putting monuments of the Bill of Rights on the grounds of all 50 State Capitols. We dedicated America's first **BILL OF RIGHTS MONUMENT** at the **ARIZONA CAPITOL** in **PHOENIX**, where it quickly became a must-see attraction for the tens of thousands of school children who visit the Capitol each year. That success led to the approval of three more State Capitol projects, in **TEXAS**, **ALABAMA** and **OKLAHOMA**, with the **CALIFORNIA** legislature set to consider a fourth early next year.

MYBILLOFRIGHTS.ORG does not accept public funding. Our ongoing efforts across America are the result of contributions from thousands of individual Americans who share our commitment to strengthening awareness of these founding ideals, as well as the support of great organizations like **NEWMAN'S OWN FOUNDATION**, **ANHEUSER-BUSCH**, and the **ARIZONA CARDINALS** and **ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS**.



The Bill of Rights Monument at the Arizona Capitol, Phoenix



The Oklahoma Capitol, Oklahoma City

This year's anniversary takes place against a background of the most bitter political climate many Americans have experienced in their lifetimes. Resembling nothing so much as a bad marriage, both sides repeatedly talk past each other, with neither willing to recognize their shared history or the common values that brought them together.

Worse, the most basic of facts about that shared history and those common values are now routinely called into question, not in the spirit of honest inquiry but as a tactic utilized to deepen the divide. Disingenuous and frequently dishonest debates rage about everything from justifying the censorship of political speech on college campuses to the history and intent of monuments to Confederate generals.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS MONUMENT PROJECT is one answer to this divisiveness. These monuments are being created to bring Americans together, in celebration of what's truly exceptional about our country: that we are the first nation in history to be founded on such a set of ideas and principles.

This is not to say America has always adhered to them, let alone that our founders were visionary enough to transcend the history of their own times. But they did manage to put in place a truly revolutionary framework, one designed to blunt the worst aspects of human nature, such as the drive for absolute power and dominion over others, and to strengthen its most noble human instinct: that every person has an equal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Nothing bears out the continuing promise of this framework better than the history of the Bill of Rights itself. Written almost entirely by slave-owners, its freedoms and principles only applied to roughly 5% of the people living in the United States when the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791. They didn't apply to slaves, women, free blacks or native Americans, or even to white men of less than a certain status and property.

And yet there is not a single exclusionary phrase in the Bill of Rights, so that as our expectation of freedom grew through the experience of it, along with the wrenching tragedy of a civil war and countless movements inspired by its promise of equality, the Bill of Rights became our touchstone, acknowledged now by virtually every American as belonging to all equally. This is the enduring genius of the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights was also written at a time of divisions even greater than we face today. With nothing less than the fate of the new Constitution at stake - and likely the survival of the fledgling United States - the greatest minds of their generation demonstrated true leadership by reaching across that political divide to craft the Bill of Rights and save the nation.

When completed, **THE BILL OF RIGHTS MONUMENT PROJECT** will leave a legacy of unprecedented scope: a national network of landmark monuments spanning America's State Capitols, providing inspirational settings for millions of visitors each year to encounter and engage with the freedoms and principles in the Bill of Rights, and each other.

We hope you'll join us in making this vision a reality.

PRESS INQUIRIES:

CHRIS BLISS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

chris.bliss@MyBillofRights.org

480-290-8530