

WANTED

The Stories That Spark Patriotism



REWARD:

A citizenry equipped to defend
liberty and love their country

What's Missing?

West Virginia's elementary social studies standards have erased the narrative spine of American identity. Gone are the moral exemplars. Gone are the tales of perseverance, sacrifice, and principle.

What's left is a sterile checklist, devoid of story, soul, and spiral.

These Stories Should Come First:

- ☒ Washington at Valley Forge, sacrifice and endurance under impossible odds.
- ☒ John Adams at the Boston Massacre trial, rule of law above mob rule.
- ☒ Frederick Douglass, the triumph of moral clarity and self-determination.
- ☒ The Creation of the Declaration of Independence, how Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin crafted the words that shook an empire and defined a nation.

What Spiraling Should Look Like

Spiraling means revisiting core civic ideas, liberty, rule of law, consent of the governed, at increasing levels of depth as students grow.

But that only works if it starts early.

If students don't:

- ☒ Know who Washington was,
- ☒ Recognize the flag or Constitution by sight,
- ☒ Understand that the U.S. system is unique in how it protects liberty,

...then middle and high school instruction is forced to start from scratch. And by then, it's often too late.

Why It Matters

A child who never hears the story of Valley Forge in first grade is a high schooler who sees the Constitution as a relic, not a promise. A child who doesn't meet Frederick Douglass in second grade may struggle to grasp the moral arc of the 14th Amendment. Without spiraled knowledge, there is no civic scaffolding, only surface, level learning and political confusion.

The Fix

Rebuild the early grades around:

- ☒ Foundational stories of sacrifice and courage
- ☒ Explicit instruction on founding documents and civic symbols
- ☒ Early introductions to concepts like freedom, justice, and government by consent

The Bottom Line

Patriotism doesn't begin with memorization, it begins with admiration.

**It begins in first grade, when a child
hears how Washington crossed
the Delaware, and wonders what
courage really means.**

*Let's put those stories back where they
belong, at the beginning.*

"But every child in America should be acquainted with his own country. He should read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country. He should lisp the praise of liberty and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen who have wrought a revolution in her favor."

- Noah Webster, *On the Education of Youth in America*, 1788

WANTED

The Ideas That Make America Possible



REWARD:

Citizens who understand freedom,
and know how to protect it

What's Missing?

West Virginia's elementary and middle school social studies standards skip over the very philosophical foundations that make the United States exceptional.

Gone are the timeless principles that fueled the American Revolution and shaped the Constitution. Gone is the understanding of why government must be limited, why rights are inherent, and why liberty requires virtue.

These Fundamental Ideas Should Anchor Civic Education:

- ☑ **Natural Law:** Rights are not granted by government, they exist by nature and must be protected.
- ☑ **Individual Worth:** Every person is endowed with dignity and value simply by being human.
- ☑ **Human Nature:** Power must be restrained because human beings, though capable of virtue, are also prone to self interest.
- ☑ **Limited Government, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances:** Government must be strong enough to govern but constrained enough to protect freedom.
- ☑ **Consent of the Governed:** Legitimate authority flows upward, from the people to their government, not the other way around.
- ☑ **Rule of Law and Due Process:** Laws must govern, not arbitrary whims; and every citizen is entitled to fair treatment.

Why Early Introduction Matters

These principles are not "advanced topics" for high school, they are the starting point for civic understanding.

If children do not:

- ☑ Hear early that rights are inherent, not bestowed,
- ☑ Understand that no leader is above the law,
- ☑ Learn that liberty must be protected by structures of government,

...then no later discussion of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, or the courts will have any lasting meaning.

Without philosophical spiraling, civics instruction becomes hollow, a technical manual without a soul.

Why It Matters

Students can memorize facts about government systems all day long. But without understanding the ideas behind the system, they will not love it, defend it, or preserve it.

Freedom depends on philosophy. If students don't learn why America exists, they won't understand why it must endure.

The Fix

Early and frequent instruction in:

- ☑ Natural rights theory and consent
- ☑ The dangers of unchecked power
- ☑ The safeguards built into America's design
- ☑ The moral duties of free citizens

The Bottom Line

Philosophy isn't extra, it's the foundation. Without it, civics becomes a recitation, not a revelation.

**We owe our students the full story,
their rights, their responsibilities,
and the timeless truths that sustain
a free republic.**

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."

-James Madison, Federalist No. 51

WANTED

The Voices That Built America



REWARD:

A generation who knows liberty is their birthright, not a gift from government

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards sideline the primary sources that tell America's story in the words of those who lived it.

Gone are the original documents. Gone are the debates, compromises, and declarations. Gone is the chance for students to hear freedom spoken in its clearest, boldest voice.

These Documents Should Be Required Reading:

- ☑ **The Magna Carta (1215):** The first written limits on government power.
- ☑ **The Mayflower Compact (1620):** The seeds of self, government planted by the first settlers.
- ☑ **The English Bill of Rights (1689):** The template for American liberty.
- ☑ **Common Sense (1776):** The fiery pamphlet that moved a nation to independence.
- ☑ **The Northwest Ordinance (1787):** A blueprint for free, self, governing states, explicitly banning slavery in new territories.
- ☑ **The Federalist Papers (1787, 88):** The definitive guide to understanding the Constitution's principles and protections.

Why Primary Sources Matter

Primary sources are the evidence. They are not interpretations. They are the unfiltered voices of liberty, justice, and civic wisdom.

If students never:

- ☑ Read the very words that declared independence,
- ☑ Wrestle with the arguments for and against the Constitution

- ☑ See how freedom was limited, expanded, and preserved over time,

...they cannot fully grasp the struggle, and the triumph, of building a republic.

Why It Matters

Without primary sources:

- ☑ History becomes a third, hand story, easily twisted.
- ☑ Civics becomes detached from the lived experience of democracy.
- ☑ Students are left defenseless against revisionist history and ideological manipulation.

Primary documents connect students to the truth. They anchor civic learning in reality, not opinion.

The Fix

Return primary sources to the heart of social studies instruction:

- ☑ Require students to read and discuss original documents at every grade band.
- ☑ Spiral key documents like the Magna Carta, Declaration, and Constitution across K- 12.
- ☑ Teach students to listen to the voices of history before drawing conclusions.

The Bottom Line

Primary sources are not optional. They are the backbone of an honest, rigorous civic education.

If we want students to defend freedom, they must first hear from those who won it.

"This was the object of the Declaration of Independance. Not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject; in terms so plain and firm, as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we were compelled to take. Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversations in letters, printed essays or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney Etc."

- Thomas Jefferson, 1825

WANTED

The Story of America's Expanding Promise



REWARD:

A generation proud of their heritage,
and prepared to perfect it

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards fail to tell the true story of American equality:

The story of a nation founded on the ideal of liberty, driven by that ideal to confront its own failings.

Gone is the connection between the Declaration's promises and the victories for human dignity. Gone are the leaders who held America to its highest standards, and made her better.

These Moments Should Define Our Story:

- ☑ **Slavery:** Condemned by the ideals of natural rights from the beginning; abolished through appeal to the Declaration's truth that "all men are created equal."
- ☑ **Voting Rights:** Expanded repeatedly by citizens invoking constitutional principles to fulfill the nation's promises.
- ☑ **Abraham Lincoln:** Called the Declaration the "apple of gold" framed by the Constitution's "picture of silver", the moral center of the republic.
- ☑ **Frederick Douglass:** Declared the Constitution a "glorious liberty document" and used its promises to advocate for abolition.
- ☑ **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** Invoked the founding documents as a "promissory note" to all Americans in the fight for civil rights.

What the Standards Should Teach

Students should learn:

- ☑ That equality was the founding ideal, even if imperfectly lived out.

- ☑ That progress is not a rejection of America's principles, it is their vindication.
- ☑ That great leaders like Lincoln and King didn't call for a new foundation, they demanded we live up to the old one.

Why It Matters

If students only learn America's flaws without learning her ideals:

- ☑ They will see injustice as proof of failure, not an invitation to work toward a more perfect union.
- ☑ They will inherit cynicism instead of hope, resentment instead of responsibility.

A love for country is born not from ignoring our flaws, but from seeing how we have risen, time and again, to correct them.

The Fix

Teach the founding ideals clearly and proudly.

- ☑ Teach how those ideals were the fuel behind abolition, suffrage, and civil rights.
- ☑ Teach students to honor the American tradition of self, correction through civic virtue and courageous leadership.

The Bottom Line

The story of America is not the story of perfect beginnings, it is the story of noble beginnings and relentless striving.

Our founding ideals are not relics to discard; they are beacons to guide us still.

"If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people".

- Calvin Coolidge, July 5, 1926

WANTED

The Structure That Protects Our Freedom



REWARD:

Citizens who understand that liberty
survives by design, not accident

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards neglect a foundational truth of American government: it is structure—not promises—that safeguards our liberty. The understanding of federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances as the true armor of liberty has disappeared. Also missing is Madison's insight that "parchment barriers" alone cannot restrain tyranny without the support of sound institutional design.

These Core Principles Must Be Taught:

- ☑ **Federalism:** Divides power vertically between national and state governments, preventing overreach at any one level.
- ☑ **Separation of Powers:** Divides authority horizontally among legislative, executive, and judicial branches to prevent concentration.
- ☑ **Checks and Balances:** Ensures each branch has the tools and motivation to resist encroachments by the others.

Together, these form what Madison called a "compound republic," a layered defense against tyranny.

What Madison Warned

In Federalist 48 and Federalist 51, Madison was blunt:

- ☑ Rights written on paper ("parchment barriers") are meaningless without a system built to restrain power.
- ☑ History is full of governments that proclaimed liberty, then trampled it.
- ☑ Only institutional design, ambition counteracting ambition, can preserve freedom.

Why It Matters

Without teaching students:

- ☑ That liberty is secured by divided and competing powers,
- ☑ That America's system is unique precisely because of its architecture,
- ☑ That the Bill of Rights is only meaningful because the structure makes it enforceable,

...they will believe rights exist because leaders are benevolent, or because majorities are kind. This is a dangerous mistake.

The Fix

Rebuild the early grades around:

- ☑ Teach federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances as pillars of liberty, not just technical details.
- ☑ Show how these structures restrain both rulers and majorities.
- ☑ Explain that the survival of rights depends on the vigilance of the citizens and their institutions.

The Bottom Line

The Bill of Rights alone does not save us. Through a compound republic of ingenious design, our divided, balanced, competing powers, keep us free.

Students must learn that America's
true safeguard is not promises, but
structure.

"I dread the depravity of human nature. I wish to guard against it by proper checks, and trust nothing to accident or chance. I will never depend on so slender a protection as the possibility of being represented by virtuous men."

- Patrick Henry, Speech at the Virginia Convention, June 12, 1788

WANTED

The Landmark Cases That Shaped Liberty



REWARD:

Citizens who understand that real justice flows from principle, not from popular opinion

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards incorrectly describe the United States Supreme Court as subject to political whims. In reality, the Supreme Court acts as the ultimate review authority, striving to interpret the Constitution in a manner that is historically consistent and based on precedent.

This inaccurate understanding of the Court forgoes its careful historical of constitutional jurisprudence and the recognition that America's greatness lies in adherence to our designed principles.

Students are often led to believe that the Constitution is a "living document," evolving with shifting public opinion, rather than understanding it as a stable framework of fixed meaning.

Landmark Cases Students Deserve to Know:

- ☑ **Marbury v. Madison (1803):** Established judicial review, giving courts the power to strike down laws that violate the Constitution.
- ☑ **Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857):** A decision reflecting the betrayal of the ideals of equality and liberty embedded in the Constitution.
- ☑ **Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) → Brown v. Board of Education (1954):** The transition from Plessy to Brown serves as a compelling illustration of how constitutional reasoning can be used to correct grave injustice.
- ☑ **Gideon v. Wainwright (1963):** Guaranteed the right to legal counsel for all criminal defendants who are unable to afford their own.
- ☑ **Miranda v. Arizona (1966):** Guaranteed due process rights to individuals in custody, particularly against self-incrimination and for legal counsel.
- ☑ **In re Gault (1967):** Affirmed that all citizens, regardless of age, deserve fair treatment in our legal system.
- ☑ **United States v. Nixon (1974):** Reinforced that no one—not even the President—is above the law.
- ☑ **Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier (1988):** Established a balance

between student free speech rights and the school's need to oversee educational standards and student well-being.

What Students Must Understand

- ☑ Judicial correction isn't rewriting the Constitution, it is applying its fixed principles to new circumstances.
- ☑ Landmark cases show the Constitution's durability, not its mutability.
- ☑ The courts refine, not reinvent, the ideals of liberty and justice.

Why It Matters

Without early exposure to these cases:

- ☑ Students will see courts as political referees, not guardians of principle.
- ☑ They will mistake mob rule for legitimate constitutional change.
- ☑ They will fail to appreciate the genius of an independent judiciary bound to the Constitution, not to the people's passing passions.

The Fix

- ☑ Introduce landmark cases at age, appropriate levels across K-12
- ☑ Emphasize the moral arc of correction within the fixed bounds of constitutional law.
- ☑ Teach students to distinguish principled change from arbitrary activism.

The Bottom Line

The genius of America's courts is not that they reflect every shift in public sentiment, it is that they can correct injustice without abandoning the Constitution's promises.

Students deserve to know that true justice is principled, prudent, and anchored in enduring truth.

Nor does this conclusion by any means suppose a superiority of the judicial to the legislative power. It only supposes that the power of the people is superior to both; and that where the will of the legislature, declared in its statutes, stands in opposition to that of the people, declared in the Constitution, the judges ought to be governed by the latter rather than the former. They ought to regulate their decisions by the fundamental laws, rather than by those which are not fundamental.

WANTED

Economic Literacy, From the Ground Up



REWARD:

Citizens who understand freedom, markets, and opportunity

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards fail to teach students the foundations of economics at grade-level-appropriate times.

Absent from curricula are the basics of markets, supply, demand, scarcity, and opportunity cost. Without this foundation, there is no understanding of how economic freedom underpins prosperity.

Instead, students are thrown into complex worldviews before they even understand basic economic principles.

These Basic Concepts Should Come First:

- ✓ **Supply and Demand:** What happens when needs and resources shift.
- ✓ **Scarcity:** Why choices must be made when resources are limited.
- ✓ **Opportunity Cost:** Understanding tradeoffs in everyday decisions.
- ✓ **The Role of Free Markets:** How voluntary exchange creates prosperity and innovation.

These ideas should be introduced in early elementary grades, not delayed until middle school.

Serious Missteps:

- ✓ **4th Grade:** Slavery is taught primarily as an economic system, divorced from its moral, historical, and human realities, turning a tragedy into an abstract commodity exercise.
- ✓ **5th Grade:** Students are asked to compare "economic worldviews" (capitalism, socialism) without first understanding basic economic function.

This is backwards. Children should first master economic basics, and encounter history in its full moral context.

In other words:

- ✓ First (in 4th grade) they misuse economics as a lens to

distort historical understanding.

- ✓ Then (in 5th grade) they prematurely push students into ideological debates, before they have economic literacy.

Why It Matters

- ✓ Students without economic literacy are easily misled by slogans and utopian promises.
- ✓ Private property rights make free trade and voluntary exchange possible.
- ✓ A free society depends on citizens who understand the basics of voluntary exchange, personal responsibility, and the limits of government intervention.
- ✓ Reducing slavery to an economic model robs students of the moral clarity they need to understand America's history, and her progress.

The Fix

- ✓ Teach economic fundamentals early and often, long before ideological comparisons are introduced.
- ✓ Treat economics as a practical literacy, not a political battleground.
- ✓ Reconnect historical tragedies like slavery to their moral and civic dimensions, not reduce them to market terms.

The Bottom Line

Students must learn how economies work before they are asked to critique them. They must understand how markets serve human freedom before they are taught to distrust them.

Economic literacy, and moral clarity, should not be optional.

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society, but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their controul with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is, not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."

- Thomas Jefferson, 1820

WANTED

The Truth About Political and Economic Systems



REWARD:

Citizens who know the real difference
between freedom and tyranny

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards treat all political and economic systems as morally and functionally equivalent.

With this approach comes a lack of serious examination of outcomes, including any acknowledgment that some systems uplift human dignity, and others crush it.

Students are asked to compare capitalism, socialism, and communism, but not to understand how these systems operate, or at what human cost.

What Students Deserve to Learn:

- ☑ **Capitalism:** The free exchange of goods and services has lifted more people out of poverty, created more innovation, and protected more individual freedoms than any other system in world history.
- ☑ **Socialism:** Not just an economic system, also a governmental framework that requires heavy state control, limits individual rights, and concentrates power.
- ☑ **Communism:** A totalitarian system where the state owns everything, individual liberty is eliminated, and dissent is often met with violence.

Socialism and Communism are not simply economic choices, they are political systems of command and coercion.

The Historical Record

- ☑ Socialism and Communism have led to the deaths of over 100 million people across dozens of countries in the 20th century, through purges, famines, and state violence.
- ☑ Capitalism, rooted in private property and voluntary exchange, has produced more wealth, freedom, and mobility than any alternative ever attempted.

Why It Matters

Without honest teaching:

- ☑ Students mistake slogans for systems.
- ☑ They believe utopian promises without understanding historical reality.
- ☑ They fail to recognize that political freedom and economic freedom rise and fall together.

The Fix

- ☑ Teach political ideologies not just by definitions, but by outcomes.
- ☑ Connect economic systems to their corresponding forms of government.
- ☑ Equip students to evaluate systems based on freedom, prosperity, and human dignity.

The Bottom Line

Freedom and tyranny are not morally equivalent. Political and economic systems must be judged by what they produce, not what they promise.

**We owe students the truth, not a
false moral parity that leads to
dangerous ignorance.**

"Education, on the other hand, means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light only by which men can be free. To deny education to any people is one of the greatest crimes against human nature. It is to deny them the means of freedom and rightful pursuit of happiness, and to defeat the very end of their being."

- Frederick Douglass, 1894

WANTED

Real Civics Education



REWARD:

Citizens who think critically, not
activists trained to react emotionally

What's Missing?

West Virginia's social studies standards prioritize "Action Civics," pushing students towards activism, before they have a proper understanding of how government works.

Without the careful, and accurate, study of the Constitution, separation of powers, and the rights and duties of citizenship, there cannot be a deliberate, foundational learning about self-government.

Instead, students are encouraged to protest, lobby, and "take action," before they know what they are acting for, or against

What Action Civics Promotes:

- ☑ Roleplaying activism instead of learning government structure.
- ☑ Organizing protests or advocacy campaigns without understanding constitutional principles.
- ☑ Emotional engagement prioritized over intellectual preparation.

Students are asked to do before they know.

What True Civics Should Teach First:

- ☑ **The Structure and Purpose of Government:** How laws are made, rights are protected, and powers are limited.
- ☑ **The Responsibilities of Citizenship:** Knowledge, virtue, critical thinking, not just activism.
- ☑ **Civil Discourse and Reasoned Debate:** Listening and argumentation, not shouting and agitation.

Only after mastering these should students consider how to engage in civic life.

Why It Matters

Without a strong foundation in civic knowledge:

- ☑ Activism becomes manipulation, not informed participation.
- ☑ Students risk becoming tools of political agendas they don't fully understand.
- ☑ We raise partisans, not citizens.

Activism without civic understanding undermines liberty, not protects it.

The Fix

- ☑ Return to real civic education based on knowledge before action.
- ☑ Teach analytical thinking, not mere political participation.
- ☑ Ensure that civic engagement is grounded in understanding, virtue, and respect for constitutional processes.

The Bottom Line

Civic education is not about producing protesters; it's about producing citizens.

**Students must first understand the
republic they live in before they are
asked to change it.**

"It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force."

- Alexander Hamilton, Fed No. 1