

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:04] DC: It takes the right skills and the right innovation to design and manage meaningful print marketing solutions. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse where we explore all facets of print and marketing that create stellar communications and sales opportunities for business success. I'm your host Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. Thanks for tuning in. Listen long and prosper.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:31] DC: Hey, everybody. It's Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. We have a very special guest today. His name is Justin Goldstein, CAE. He is the Director of Corporate Relations at the Bill of Rights Institute. The Bill of Rights Institute is a non-profit organization, founded in September 1999, with a network of over 70,000 history and civics educators. They are committed to providing the highest quality resources and programs for students, teachers, and parents. Justin, welcome to the program.

[0:01:12] JG: Thanks for having me, Deborah. It's great to be here.

[0:01:15] DC: I was so excited when you reached out to me on LinkedIn with the work that you're doing and I want to know all about that. But first, I want to start with what does CAE mean in your title?

[0:01:30] JG: Sure. Thanks for asking. It stands for Certified Association Executive, which is a designation given out by the American Society of Association Executives.

[0:01:40] DC: Is that a difficult thing to get?

[0:01:42] JG: Absolutely. It's a year's worth of studying and it's a test you came and sit for until you get five years of association experience, at least the last time I checked. It culminates with a four-hour multiple-choice exam, which is one of the most difficult things I've ever done. But it was totally worthwhile and I recommend it to anyone who wants to lead an association.

[0:02:05] DC: I want to learn more about what you do with the Bill of Rights Institute. As you know, this is a global podcast. So, maybe we could start with what is the Bill of Rights for anyone who might not be aware, and then you could come and tell us what the work is that you do there.

[0:02:22] JG: Absolutely, and thanks for asking. Basically, the Bill of Rights Institute follows the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. These are all founding documents of the United States. What I do at the Bill of Rights Institute is grant writing, sponsorships, and in-kind donations. These help support all of our resources for teachers and students, which are 100% free. I just wanted to also add that we are non-profit and non-partisan.

[0:02:51] DC: So, you could be a certified association executive anywhere, but you've chosen to do it at the Bill of Rights Institute. Why is this work important for you and why is it important for everybody else as well?

[0:03:08] JG: Absolutely. Thanks for asking that, Deborah. We're in a point in our history where civil discourse is a lost art. We say at the Bill of Rights Institute, we teach civics, not govics. It's really important to be compassionate, and empathetic towards your fellow citizens, and actually, this goes for any place in the world. You should always be open to other people's opinions, and be respectful, and find common ground. That's the one thing that we teach our students and something our teachers impart to their different pupils that they have that, everyone's voice matters and that you should be compassionate about what the issues are that are going on. I think if people were more civil towards each other, we'd be a lot better off than we are right now.

[0:03:53] DC: Personally, is that why you've taken this role on?

[0:03:57] JG: Absolutely. I was a history minor in college, and I always had a love of history. I come from a family of teachers. My mom was a special education teacher, my younger sister was a reading specialist. So, education has always had a very special place in my heart. That's one of the major reasons I wanted to give back. I've always worked for associations that did big trade shows or award contests. It was time for me to do something different, and I feel I'm making a difference every single day at the Bill of Rights Institute.

[0:04:30] DC: I remember when I was growing up, my first conscious memory of civics, I guess, came through social studies. My first memory ever was fourth grade, and I just remember because it was the bicentennial year. So, it was a big deal, so it's ingrained in my memory. It's kind of when the social programs also came around. There was anti-pollution movements and things of that nature. We really started paying attention to how the government works, and I grew up with something that was called Schoolhouse Rock, "I'm just a bill," and you remembered all of that stuff. Things have changed since then. I'm not even sure if they teach "social studies" anymore. Do you have any insight into how these things manifest in schools these days?

[0:05:25] JG: That's a great point, Deborah, and that's one of the major issues that we come across, that civics is a lost art, and speech and debate is a lost art. We actually just recently acquired a company called Incubate Debate, which puts on speech forensics competitions in high schools around the country. I think there's a fear of debate and healthy discourse in this country, and something I was always raised to do is always see the opposite side of the person you're speaking with, which is just a sign of respect. Not to shout down your competition as a student when you're in high school. It's actually listen, and understand, and respect different people's points of views. You're absolutely right, it is a lost art.

That's the one thing we do at the Bill of Rights Institute through our generous benefactors. We do free professional development in high schools, and we provide free resources. It's our goal really to provide a strong civic education for every student in this country and do that for free.

[0:06:23] DC: How does the program work? What are the materials that you're sending out, and how are you choosing these schools and institutions that you're working with? I'm sorry, I'm known for multipart questions.

[0:06:36] JG: That's okay.

[0:06:37] DC: Hopefully you got all three of those.

[0:06:38] JG: No, I got it all. It's a great question. The Bill of Rights Institute has been giving out pocket constitutions for as long as it's been in existence.

[0:06:48] DC: Just to clarify what the Constitution is for people around the world.

[0:06:52] JG: The Constitution is a set of ideals that Americans live by. The Bill of Rights was obviously amendments to that document. The Declaration of Independence, obviously, for those who don't know, that was a document that we basically stood up as a nation, or a new nation of colonies asking for our independence from Great Britain. Those are the core documents. However, we teach women's suffrage, we teach civil rights, and we teach history the way it is, and we don't change it. That's another important thing that we need to teach everything.

But in terms of the pocket constitutions, like I said, they've been around since we started. My first couple of weeks at the Bill of Rights Institute earlier this year, I asked the question, being that I got my start in the graphic arts industry and my love of print, I said, "Who prints these? These are great. I'd love – how are these distributed? Who do we send these to?" They said, "You know, Justin, we would love to give more of these out, but like any nonprofit, there's always limitations." So, I said, "Well, what if I could engage my friends in the graphic arts industry, perhaps they could help." They said, "Justin, that'll be phenomenal if you could do that."

That's where Power of the Printed Word was born. Then, I was very lucky that I had a strong education staff as part of the Bill of Rights Institute that kind of gave me direction that, "Justin, we do a call out to all around the nation to teachers who are interested in pocket constitutions. So, it doesn't matter if you're a Title I school, a private school, even if you're homeschooled. If you're interested in getting a copy of the pocket constitution, we will make it available for you." That is where the graphic arts industry can help. I could talk more about that.

[0:08:38] DC: We'll get to that for sure because we definitely need some help. Can you elaborate a little more? What is The Power of the Printed Word?

[0:08:46] JG: The Power of the Printed Word combines my love of history in the pocket constitution with my love of the graphic arts industry. I just wanted to really kind of payback to my colleagues in the printing industry that gave me my first start out of college, my first association job. That not only are we teaching people about our founding documents, which are very important. But that the first communication method print is alive and well, and that is a great way to communicate any message you're trying to communicate, and that's something I

wanted to imprint with high school students, no pun intended. I wanted them to appreciate that our founding documents were putting pen to paper. They weren't on a tablet, they weren't on a device, and that's why these are so special. These students love getting it. Obviously, anybody could pull up a device and look at it anytime, but there's an emotional connection to these documents, and I think that's why so many students and teachers around the country have asked for the printed version of it.

[0:09:46] DC: Have you gotten feedback on how they're using them with students?

[0:09:52] JG: Absolutely. They're using it as a reference guide. Just the other week, actually, I had a student told me that he carries it around in his backpack. Again, it comes up with people trying to educate themselves about what their rights are as citizens. Sometimes there's a lot of misinformation out there, and no surprise, it comes from the Internet. It's nice for someone to pull out a printed document and say, "Hey, look, right here, these are what the amendments are. This is what it says in the Constitution because it's infallible. This is the printed word on paper, and I have a copy of it." That's how they're using it.

[0:10:28] DC: You mentioned that there's a mechanism if you're a school or a person, you could just go to the website and request the pocket constitution. Is that the process?

[0:10:39] JG: Yes, that is one process. You can find this in the editor's notes. There is a way to request them if you're an educator. We also kind of do a call for requests. We have our teachers on staff to reach out to school districts around the country, and obviously homeschool and Title I, saying, "Are you going to need pocket constitutions?" Then, we collect those requests and we compile a list of basically who needs one.

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[0:12:07] DC: Okay, Justin, do you have any idea to date how many pocket constitutions you've sent out?

[0:12:13] JG: To date, we've sent out close to 50,000 pocket constitutions in North and South Carolina, Ohio, and Nebraska. So, very proud of them.

[0:12:23] DC: Wow. Just those states?

[0:12:26] JG: Just those states, yes.

[0:12:28] DC: That is incredible. Who are some of your current partners that are helping making that possible? By the way, congratulations. Those are good states too, to have those pocket constitutions.

[0:12:40] JG: Absolutely. It's quite thrilling. Again, I really need to tip my hat to my friends at the state level, The Print & Graphic Communication Association, The Printing Industry of the Carolinas, and the Printing Industry Midwest. Their members so far have been huge, Salem One, BindTech, Foote Printing, Cool School Folder. They've just done phenomenal things. I need to give a shoutout also to SAPI Paper and Canon for helping support postage. But there's just so many passionate people that want to help students and more to come. Very excited about it.

[0:13:18] DG: Now, the big question. How can people get involved, whether it's being an evangelist, or getting them into schools or institutions, or actually helping you with printing and postage, and things of that nature?

[0:13:34] JG: That's a great question, Deborah. Every little bit counts. The demand is voracious for pocket constitutions. Whether you're a vendor and you want to partner with a printer on paper, or ink, or plates, or just any kind of consumables. If you're a printer that maybe necessarily doesn't have perfect binding or saddle stitching, you can partner with a trade bindery. You could even team up one postage together if you are a vendor. The quantities are as many as you want to do. It's whatever's in your heart. There's no magic number. You could do a thousand, you could do 100,000. For every 100 pocket constitutions, it helps one classroom. Even that is a big deal.

That's just one way you can get involved and it'll be in the editor's notes on how you can reach out to me directly, to either make a financial contribution or an in-kind contribution. Anything you do at the Bill of Rights Institute is 100% tax deductible.

[0:14:33] DC: I know that you said that your organization is nonpartisan and I really respect that. I also want to say that, as I mentioned before, there has been a systematic turn away from teaching — I mean, I don't even think if you asked a Gen Z like, "Did you learn civics in school?" They probably wouldn't even know what that was.

[0:14:58] JG: Right.

[0:14:59] DC: Again, I called it social studies, which I believe is what you're calling it.

[0:15:04] JG: Yes.

[0:15:04] DC: But there is a big problem that people in the United States don't understand how the government works, especially in these trying times. What is your message to educators out there about maybe how this can support them? Also, because I'm sure teachers are also nervous about bringing these things up as well these days, which I don't want anyone to think

that I'm skirting over this issue. This is not a political discussion. I don't want to make it one, but we're having a discussion about education. This, I believe is a fair question.

[0:15:45] JG: Absolutely. Well, thank you for asking that. One of the ideals of the Bill of Rights Institute is our academic integrity and primary sources. We have strict guidelines. We have probably the best educators in the industry, unabashedly say that in terms of civics and history. These are people with PhDs, and they're imparting their knowledge, and their resources to educators around the country through our resources on our website, through professional development.

We also care about access. Even if you don't have an Internet connection, we have an app that can be used offline where you can put primary sources, or videos, or teaching materials. So, if you have a student who's in a rural area or an urban area who doesn't have Internet access, they can still use it and use it as a resource. An internet connection is not necessary for most of our resources on our playlist.

[0:16:41] DC: Well, how do they download it if they don't have the internet access? Just a question.

[0:16:45] JG: They originally needed to download it, but if they're at school, they don't have to rely on a continuous –

[0:16:51] DC: Like when they get home or something like that?

[0:16:51] JG: When they get home. Exactly.

[0:16:53] DC: Okay, I get you.

[0:16:55] JG: Which is great, depending on what your resources are outside of school, at least you have the basic tenants of our plans and information, which is critical.

[0:17:06] DC: I might have missed this before, but something you just said is making me want to ask you this. It's not just about sending the pocket constitutions; you're helping teachers create lesson plans around how to teach about it?

[0:17:22] JG: Absolutely.

[0:17:23] DC: I think we missed that part or I missed that part.

[0:17:25] JG: We have ready-to-go lesson plans in curriculum. Again, everything is on our website in terms of videos, lesson plans, content, and talking points. It's really a roadmap for school districts and teachers to make sure that there's a strong civic education no matter where you're at. That's the one thing I think that sets us apart from other associations out there that all of our materials are free. Teachers and students don't have to pay a dime for our curriculum. I think that's critically important.

That's one of the main reasons I work at the Bill of Rights Institute. It's because it doesn't matter what walk of life you come from, you can have access to our resources, which everyone should know. It doesn't matter if you're a student, our resources apply to anyone trying to brush up on civics, and leadership, and what made this country great.

[0:18:19] DC: I also love that it's an accredited resource and everyone can be teaching the same thing, which I also think is super important. I mean, going back to when I grew up, that Schoolhouse Rock taught me how a bill became a law and it hasn't changed. So, as long as you stay, as long as it hasn't changed, then everybody should be on the same page about how the government functions and things of that nature. I mean, this work is so important and it has never been more important.

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[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:19:31] DC: Is there an age bracket? Do you suggest that 10 and above? What is the age bracket for your materials and when do you think teachers should start teaching this information?

[0:19:42] JG: That's a great question, Deborah and it's actually great timing. Our resources are through K through 12. We actually just launched a new module called BRI Junior, which are for younger people, even kindergarten age. I have a five-year-old. I think it's important, even if it's just basic symbols. What is the Liberty Bell? What is the Constitution? What are just some other symbols of civics and government? Which kind of goes back to your Schoolhouse Rock example, which even though it was a little bit before my time, it resonated in pop culture and society. I still see people wearing T-shirts. What is a bill? You see him sitting on the Capitol steps.

That is something we really wished to impart early on. I think, what it teaches – you might say, well, how does it help a kindergartner? It teaches basically democracy. It teaches empathy and respecting people's opinions. Even if you're voting on what the stuffed animal is in the classroom, that's government, that's civics. Again, that's something that is a basic tenant of a building block. Honestly, that's something that I – I graduated high school in the year 2000, but as a kindergartner, I don't think I had anything like that. That's a nice thing that the Bill of Rights Institute provides for the younger audience.

For the pocket constitutions, primarily, people ages 13 to 19 are getting them, but it doesn't preclude anyone who's homeschooled. Or if there is a social studies teacher in second or third grade who'd like some pocket constitutions, they really are for everyone. It's a great resource. We do accommodations for everyone. Someone who's a son of a special education teacher like myself, we are working on a program called Civics for Everyone, which really is for people of all abilities. I'm very passionate about that.

The prior 10 years I worked at the Bill of Rights Institute, I worked for the American Speech Language Hearing Association, which was for audiologists and speech pathologists. Very sensitive and cognizant of that. I even have a family member who's autistic, which really was the inspiration behind Civics for Everyone.

[0:21:46] DC: That's incredible. And I'm so glad that you've put focus on making sure that everybody has the access that they need to this important information. It certainly helps us all to come together and move forward together. This work is so important. I just want to thank you so much for giving back to the world and giving back to the students and to this country. And anybody out there who can help. If you've ever been around a non-profit, there is no help that is too small. They will take any help that you have, including probably stuffing envelopes if you're in the Arlington area, I'm just saying. Usually, you guys don't turn away help, whatever that might be.

Everything you need to connect with Justin and the Bill of Rights Institute is in the show notes. Check out the videos, check out — order a Constitution, and make some recommendations of where they might be willing to accept some. Ask if you have teachers in your family, make sure that they're aware of this program, and let's do something good for everybody. Thank you again, Justin, so much for your time. Any final words?

[0:23:00] JG: No. I just want to thank you, Deborah, and your audience. Again, just so thankful for the great people in the graphic arts industry. I had been out of it for almost 11 years, and the fact that great people still remember me, and are willing to help this great cause really touches my heart. But I just want to thank you personally and thank your audience for considering this important initiative.

[0:23:22] DC: Until next time, everybody. Print long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

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hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

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Mentioned in This Episode:

Justin Goldstein, CAE: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/justingoldstein/>

Bill of Rights Institute: <https://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/>

Power of the Printed Word: <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/power-of-the-printed-word#>

Incubate Debate: <https://incubatedebate.org/>

The Print & Graphic Communication Association: <https://printcommunications.org/>

The Printing Industry of the Carolinas (PICA): <https://picanet.org/>

Printing Industry Midwest (PIM): <https://www.pimw.org/>

Salem One: <https://salem-one.com/>

BindTech: <https://www.bindtechinc.com/>

Foote Printing: <https://footeprinting.com/>

Cool School Folder Co.: <https://coolschoolfolder.com/>

Sappi Paper: <https://www.sappi.com/>

Canon: <https://www.usa.canon.com/>

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