

RECONSTRUCTING AMERICAN HISTORY



Renewing American Leadership
Capitol Visitor Center Report

By Rick Tyler, Founding Director

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Renewing American Leadership has prepared this report on the recently opened Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) to address and substantiate the planners' clear bias in four major areas: America's Godly heritage; our system of American governance; Constitutional interpretation; and ideology. Moreover, this report will document historical inaccuracies presented to visitors of the CVC. This report will demonstrate that the CVC, as planned by the Capitol Preservation Commission and the House Architect, and as executed by the House Administration staff, presents visitors with a biased, unbalanced, incomplete, and in many cases inaccurate history of America and the Capitol. The examples cited in this document are merely illustrative of the type of errors that permeate the center – the list is in no way intended to be exhaustive but only representative of the type of errors of which exemplify the biases listed above.

This report follows up on three documents created before the December 2, 2008 opening of the CVC. The first document, "Ten Illustrative Errors in the CVC, representing errors both of Omission and of Fact," ([Addendum A](#)) created by David Barton of Wallbuilders, lists ten factual errors or omissions that were contained in "The Final Design" produced by Ralph Appelbaum and approved by the Capitol Preservation Commission (CPC) in July 2005. "The Final Design Book" contains the CVC Exhibition Script which includes the text for all of the displays in the Center.

The second document is an October 1, 2008 Memorandum ([Addendum B](#)) titled "CVC Correspondence" from Congressman Randy Forbes (R-VA) to the House Administration Staff requesting eight specific improvements to the CVC plan in four categories: Religious History In the Capitol; Rich Tradition of Prayer; Acknowledgement of God; and Judeo-Christian Traditions throughout the Capitol. The third document is from U.S. Senator Jim DeMint titled "CVC Considerations and Omissions" ([Addendum C](#)).

The report below compares Barton's list of errors and omissions and the Forbes and DeMint Memorandums to the actual displays and text at the CVC as of December 12, 2008 – ten days after the CVC opened to the public.

Lastly, this report will make other observations about the CVC not addressed in any of the three documents and will point out additional historical inaccuracies and other factual errors.



Part One: Bias Against America's Godly Heritage

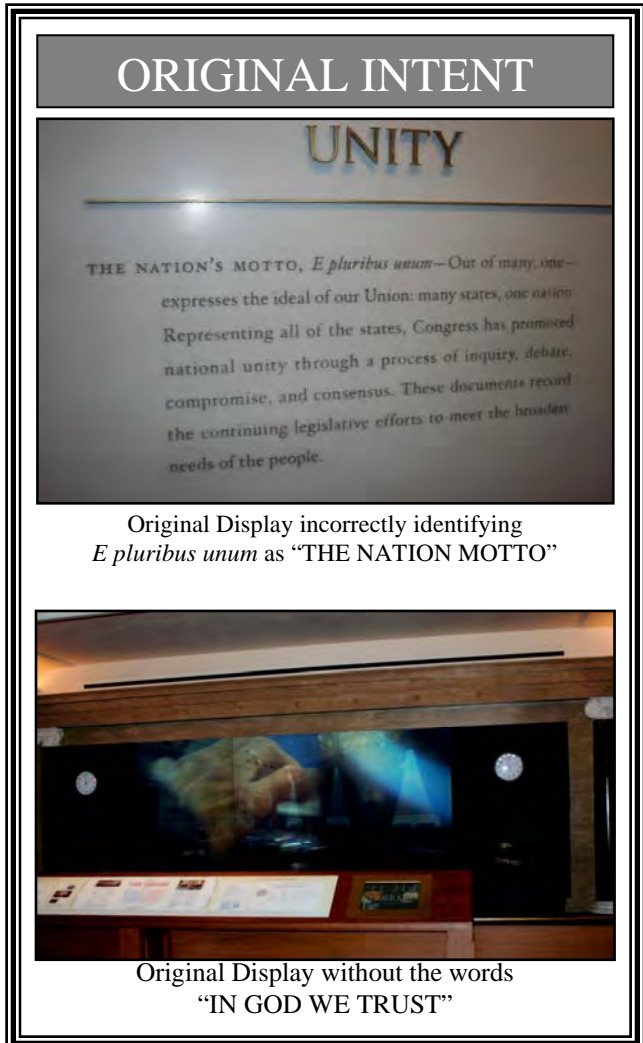
The National Motto

The CVC had incorrectly identified “E pluribus unum” in its Unity display as our national motto. Since 1956, our national motto has been “In God We Trust.” The CVC text had previously stated, “*The nation's motto, E pluribus unum--Out of many, one--expresses the ideal of our Union: many states, one nation. Representing all of the states, Congress has promoted national unity through a process of inquiry, debate, compromise, and consensus. These documents record the continuing legislative efforts to meet the broadest needs of the people.*”

After congressional members pointed out the error and asked that the display be corrected, the words, “THE NATION’S MOTTO” were plastered over.

Additionally, after objections raised by several members, the words “IN GOD WE TRUST” were added above the replica of the Speaker’s Rostrum in the Virtual House Theater in order to accurately portray the actual Speaker’s Rostrum in the House Chamber. The words were not included in the originally approved CVC text.

It should be noted that in one photo still contained in the display of the actual Speaker’s rostrum, the words “In God We Trust” are cropped out. In another photo, the words appear to be washed out. Of the three photos of the House Chamber contained in the display, none of them contain the words “IN GOD WE TRUST.” Since these words were omitted from the original display, and the words “E PLURIBUS UNUM” were correctly included in the corresponding location in the Senate display, it seems reasonable to conclude that the omission was not an oversight, but intentional.



We the People

The CVC fully embraces the theme of “E pluribus unum” - from many, one - and explains its meaning, yet it fails to correspondingly explain the nation’s motto “In God We Trust.” “E pluribus unum” comes from the obverse side of the Great Seal of the United States adopted by Congress in 1782. On the reverse side are the Latin phrases Novus Ordo Seclorum (New Order of the Ages) and Annuat Cœptis (He approves our undertakings).



Senator DeMint noted that the seal includes a “watchful eye of God” symbolizing “His favor on America’s affairs.”

Yet, the Great Seal of the United States is missing from the CVC entirely.

Northwest Ordinance, 1787

David Barton’s “Ten Illustrative Errors in the CVC, representing errors both of Omission and of Fact” noted that the proposed text describing the Northwest Ordinance, 1797 states: “*The authors of the Northwest Ordinance believed educated citizens were critical to the success of self-government. Article 3 declared, ‘... education shall forever be encouraged.’ The Northwest Ordinance, together with the earlier Land Ordinance of 1785, set aside a section of each new township’s land for the support of public schools.*”

The CVC text remains unchanged. However, a separate text in the same display cites the full quote and provides the reader with the correct context, “Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

Now there are two markers with two meanings, one of which is a misrepresentation of the sentence contained in the Northwest Ordinance.

The first marker with the abbreviated quote will confuse visitors because, as Barton contends, it completely changes the meaning of the sentence. This shortened version of the quote leads the reader to believe that the Framers of the Northwest Ordinance

thought that “educated citizens were critical to the success of self-government.” In contrast, the full historical quote explains that “they believed that ‘religion, morality, and knowledge’ were critical to the success of self-government. Schools were not the object of the Ordinance but instead were the means of implementing [religion, morality and knowledge].”

It is inexplicable why the full quote was *added* to the display instead of *changing the original* abbreviated text to contain the full quote, except that the CVC chose confusion over being forced to explain the Framers’ belief that schools and other forms of education should be encouraged in order to teach religion,

morality, and knowledge, and that all three were necessary for good government and the peoples' happiness. As it stands, there are two texts with two separate meanings that make the display both confusing and inaccurate.

Church in the Capitol

Barton reported that the CVC text on non-governmental use of the Capitol reads: *“Opened in 1800, the building was made available to the Washington community when not in use by Congress. Religious services and other civic events were regularly held there.”*

The CVC text remains unchanged.

This is clearly misleading and omits facts that Barton raised in his paper. On December 4, 1800, Congress authorized an official church *for* Congress whose services would also be opened to the public. By 1857, Congress listed the duties of the House and Senate chaplains elected by Congress. One duty was to conduct weekly religious services for the members.

It is inaccurate to suggest that worship services were only allowed *“when not in use by Congress”* because the historical fact is that worship services, as Congressman Randy Forbes wrote in his memo, were originally an “official function of Congress.” By mid-century, there were as many as 2,000 people per week attending church in the Capitol; additionally, up to four different local congregations also used the Capitol for weekly worship services. It was when the Congress was in session—not out of session—that the attendance was greatest. As Washington, DC grew and churches were built, the Capitol was no longer needed to serve as a church—not that it was ever thought to be inappropriate. Several Presidents attended church services in the Capitol, including President Thomas Jefferson, who saw no conflict in a religious worship service being conducted in a public building. Jefferson, as Barton wrote, even “sent the Marine Corps band to play the worship services.”

Barton, Forbes and DeMint all pointed out that the CVC could have included the history of church services in the Capitol along with the history of the many and diverse chaplains from both houses. The history of our Godly heritage at the Capitol includes many historical firsts—all missing from the CVC.

- First woman to preach in the House church (and likely the first woman to ever speak at the Capitol), English evangelist Dorothy Ripley (1767-1832) on January 12, 1806 (with both President Thomas Jefferson and Vice President Aaron Burr in attendance).
- Second woman to preach in the House church in 1827 and the first to preach to four Presidents, Harriet Livermore (1788-1868).
- First Roman Catholic to preach in the House church, Bishop John England (1786-1842) January 8, 1826 (with President John Quincy Adams in attendance).
- First African American to preach in the Capitol, a former slave and pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, February 12, 1865 (on Lincoln's birthday and twelve days after the Republican Congress adopted the 13th Amendment banning slavery).
- First Jewish Rabbi to open the House in prayer, Morris Raphall (1798-1868) in 1860.

It is interesting that the one specific Capitol sermon mentioned in the CVC is a newspaper account of the Rev. David Austin's July 4, 1801 sermon. The CVC text accompanying a facsimile of a newspaper article reads, *“Mr. Austin's Discourse was a sermon reported on in the Alexandria Advertiser on July 27, 1801.”* Rev. Austin, who did gain Thomas Jefferson as a follower, was removed from his church in Elizabeth,

New Jersey and by the Presbytery because of his millennialist preaching. Considered fanatical, he thought he had been called upon by God to usher in the millennium, and even assembled thousands for the day that he said Christ would return. He thought the Jews must be restored first to a “new Jerusalem,” which he thought was New Haven, CT, and then Washington, DC. If a single preacher were to be chosen to highlight in the CVC in an attempt to embarrass Christians today, it would be David Austin.

The CVC also makes no mention of the members’ congressional prayer chapel just off the Rotunda in the Capitol, with its majestic stained glass window of George Washington kneeling in prayer.

Attestation Clause

In the Constitution’s attestation clause contained in Article VII of the Constitution, it reads, “Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the States present the seventeenth day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven.”

Barton reported that the marker in the CVC’s display of the Constitution omits the words “in the year of our Lord.”

The text is still missing from the CVC display.

It is hard to imagine the thought process that led to deliberately leaving out these words other than a willful effort to remove an acknowledgement of God.

Acknowledgement of God

Both Congressman Randy Forbes and Senator Jim DeMint requested several acknowledgements to God that could easily be incorporated into the CVC:

- A photo of members of Congress singing “God Bless America” on the steps of the Capitol on September 12, 2001.
- Pictures from the National Day of Prayer, the Annual Bible Reading or Pro-Life rallies (The CVC currently has photos of AIDS demonstrations and Earth Day gatherings.)
- Displays of congressional resolutions requesting proclamations for days of Prayer, Fasting or Thanksgiving, including those for Washington and Lincoln.
- A display showing the Geneva Bible (also called the Breeches Bible), which is the Bible depicted in the massive Capitol Rotunda painting “Embarkation of the Pilgrims” by Robert Weir. The Geneva Bible had its roots in persecution and was favored by the Pilgrims and early Puritans because it was written in plain language and contained commentary to clarify the passages, which led many to find freedom rooted in biblical understanding.
- The Religious significance of four of the eight paintings, “Landing of Columbus” (featuring a cross), the “Embarkation of the Pilgrims” (depicting prayer and a Bible study, with a Geneva Bible at its center), the “Discovery of the Mississippi” (which shows a Crucifix), and the “Baptism of Pocahontas” in the Rotunda is completely ignored.
- A display showing the Aitken Bible, sometimes called “The Bible of the Revolution.” It was the first known English-language Bible to be printed in America. It was recommended by the Congress and was the only Bible to receive Congressional approval.

- A display of Lincoln’s Bible upon the table used at Lincoln’s Inaugural. The displayed table in the CVC was originally used to hold Lincoln’s Bible while he swore to uphold and defend the Constitution. Offering no explanation as to what the purpose of the table was, the CVC text states only, *“This table was made especially for Abraham Lincoln and was cast from the same molds used to make the balusters and other decorative elements on the Capitol dome, which was built during the Civil War. Used by Lincoln during his second inauguration, the table can be seen in the framed photograph on the wall behind you.”*

The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance is mentioned as part of the “Legislative Day” for both Houses of Congress but nowhere, as DeMint noted, is the text of the Pledge displayed in the CVC. The Pledge contains the only words recited by both the House and Senate at the beginning of every session. It is hard to conclude that the Pledge should be omitted from the CVC, but it is; perhaps because it contains the phrase “under God.”

Church and Civil Rights

DeMint points out that there are “no mentions of the significant role that churches played in the civil rights movement.” This seems to be a serious omission, for it is hard to imagine how the campaign could have succeeded without them. Nor does the CVC display the text of Dr. Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech.



Part Two: Bias Against Our System of American Governance

Constitutional Republic

The Forbes memo pointed out that nowhere in the CVC is our form of government acknowledged. A quote from Washington's farewell address states, "*the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government,*" and is one of three places in the CVC text that mentions a Republic, but nowhere is it mentioned or explained that our form of government is a Constitutional Republic. The House film presentation calls our government a "representative democracy." The orientation film asks, "How are the citizens and states to be represented in this new republic?" Yet it fails to define a republic.

Moreover, there is no mention of why our government is so unique among the nations of the world, nor is there any attempt to explain the American view that citizens "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," or why this declaration was the most radical statement in all of human history with regard to how people were to be governed. The only mention of the "Creator" in the CVC is contained in Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania's epitaph, "Equality of Man before his Creator," but the CVC text also says, as DeMint noted, that "*he was not particularly religious.*"

There is no mention of due process of law. The only mention of limited government is contained in a description of John Randolph (1773-1833) of Virginia explaining that he "*championed agrarian interests and limited government.*" Yet it goes on to say "*the country soon passed Randolph by as manufacturing interests grew and politics became more democratic.*"

Forbes correctly mentioned in his memorandum that there is nothing in the CVC to inspire patriotism or love of country. DeMint pointed out that the triumphant Revolutionary themes depicted in four of the eight massive paintings in the Capitol Rotunda are left out entirely. There is also no effort to explain why millions of immigrants have come—and *still* come—to America to find religious freedom, to escape tyranny, and to seek what Alexis de Tocqueville so vividly described as American Exceptionalism.

The text of the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem is missing.

DeMint pointed out that while the CVC displays "photos of the American Flag, it does not include the text of our National Anthem or explain the design of our flag."

The CVC text ineptly attempts to explain the separation of powers and how each branch of government is checked by another. It incorrectly states that, "*The Judiciary, with the Supreme Court as the final authority, decides if laws are constitutional.*" The truth is that the power belongs to *the people*, who can overrule the court through the Legislative Branch, or the Executive Branch—each of which can simply ignore the Court.

The People's Branch

The CVC incorrectly states that, "*With ratification in 1913 of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution, the Senate, like the House, could truly call itself 'the people's branch.'*" Barton wrote that although the way Senators are elected changed with the Seventeenth Amendment, "the purpose of the Senate did not." The Senate was still to provide equal representation among the states, as discussed in the *Federalist Papers*.

Part Three: Biased Constitutional Interpretation

The Three-Fifths Clause

Barton reported that the CVC text read, “*After the Civil War, military conflict turned into political conflict. The Constitution originally had considered a slave only three-fifths of a person.*”

The CVC text remains unchanged.

This is one of the most misunderstood parts of the original Constitution. As Barton stated, it is “an unequivocally false statement and unfortunately has its origin in sloppy modern scholarship.”

The three-fifths clause was a compromise between the slave-holding states of the South and the free states in the North. For the purpose of representation and to increase Southern strength in Congress, the South wanted the House to count each of their slaves. The North, who did not want to allow the South to gain pro-slavery seats in the House by counting those who could not vote, was against counting slaves for the purpose of determining the number of representatives to Congress.

The resulting compromise was to allow only three-fifths of the slave population in each state to be counted for purposes of representation, thereby limiting pro-slavery representation in Congress. Barton noted that the clause was clearly an “anti-slavery provision in the Constitution” because it provided an incentive to southern states to free slaves in order to increase its congressional representation.

Barton reported that abolitionist Frederick Douglass himself affirmed in his lectures that this clause was not directed at personhood but at the limitation of pro-slavery representatives from the South. This is upheld in the Constitutional Convention records. Nowhere did the debate center on “personhood” but only on limiting pro-slavery representation.

The CVC’s text unfortunately reinforces the false modern interpretation and misunderstanding of the clause and negates its true anti-slavery purpose.

We The People

In Barton’s report, he cited the CVC’s incorrect text about the Preamble to the Constitution. The CVC text states, “*Preamble: sets forth the national purpose. It is issued by ‘We the People,’ rather than the states, demonstrating that popular sovereignty--the principle that governmental authority is derived from the will of the people-is the foundation of the United States.*”

The CVC text remains unchanged.

In contrast, Barton argued that “the Constitution itself says that it is issued by the States; as Article VII (Clauses 1 & 2) acknowledges: ‘The ratification of the conventions of nine States shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the same. Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the States present the seventeenth day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven . . .’”

Moreover, the Tenth Amendment states that, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States are reserved to the States respectively or to the people.” Barton pointed to the *Federalist Papers*, which state that the “purpose of Article I of the Constitution was to equally represent the States as well as the people – the States in the Senate, and the people in the House. There is no historical basis for stating that it was a document of the people and not of the states.”

Part Four: Biased Ideology

A Domestic Focus

In a display about the House under the title “A DOMESTIC FOCUS,” the CVC text asks, “*Why did the House concentrate primarily on domestic concerns, leaving foreign policy to the presidency? Two factors kept representatives' attention at home. First, as domestic policy grew increasingly technical, it demanded greater expertise--and attention. Second, presidents consistently showed superior leadership in foreign and economic policies. Compared with the more fragmented chorus in the House, the president's ability to speak with a single voice and take a broader approach to these national issues gave the executive branch an important advantage.*”

There was no attempt to explain in the display that the Constitution gave the Executive Branch a large share primarily of non-domestic roles. These include the Powers to defend America from foreign enemies as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and the Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties; and to nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, appoint Ambassadors.

Progressive Worldview

There is an overarching theme of the CVC which is the need for an ever-expanding government in order to create “a more perfect union.” The CVC text under this title overreaches, “*For more than two hundred years, the Capitol has been the place where representatives of the American people have debated how best to achieve the nation's ideals. In this part of the gallery, changing displays of some of our most important documents illustrate the role of Congress in defining and helping to realize national goals and aspirations.*”

This overstatement of Congress’ importance is followed with text stating that “*unity, freedom, common defense, general welfare, knowledge, and exploration all derive from the Constitution. The Preamble declares that the highest goals of the government are ‘to form a more perfect Union,’ and to provide for ‘common defense,’ ‘general Welfare,’ and the ‘Blessings of Liberty.’ Article I gives Congress the power to promote ‘Science and useful Arts,’ which has resulted in congressional support of knowledge and exploration. The meaning of liberty is further defined in the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, which guarantee specific freedoms.*” Such a statement is well and good, but the CVC then defines these ideals, goals, and aspirations in decidedly progressive terms.

For example, “General Welfare” in the CVC text abandons the historical understanding of government’s responsibilities. “General Welfare,” as Matthew Spalding, Ph.D., director of the B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies at The Heritage Foundation wrote, is “found in Article I, Section 8's restriction of the taxing power, but taken [in the CVC text] to mean ‘improving transportation, promoting agriculture and industry, protecting health and the environment, and seeking ways to solve social and economic problems.’”

The CVC’s dominant theme seems to assert that America’s greatness stems from the beneficence of Congress as reflected in this example of CVC text. “*Throughout all of this change, senators continue to promote the nation's goals and aspirations, while meeting the demands of security in a troubled world.*” Yet, it might just as well be argued that America remains great *in spite of* Congress.

Still missing from this section, as DeMint noted, are “Providence and Prayer” which are deserving of attention. He then cites “Benjamin Franklin’s call to prayer at the Constitutional Convention, presidential

proclamations calling our nation to days of prayer, fasting, thanksgiving, and remembrance and most significantly demonstrated in the close of the Declaration of Independence where the signings make an appeal to the ‘Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of the [their] intentions’ and declare ‘with a Firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.’”

Moreover, DeMint states that “while the Preamble to the Constitution is referenced throughout the CVC, it is never displayed in its entirety, and a core example of ‘the blessings of liberty’ which is religious liberty is completely ignored” and is still ignored by the CVC.

Finally, the Forbes and DeMint memorandums both mentioned a biased presentation in the Americana displays, where photos of *progressive* activities such as AIDS and environmental activism are featured, but *traditional* activities such as sporting, hunting, fishing or faith-related activities are absent. This still remains true.

Party Identity

The CVC does correctly state that “*After the Civil War, the Senate’s large Republican majority aimed to set policies for reconstructing the South and protecting freed slaves*” and that the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act that “*allowed the people of Western territories to decide on slavery themselves . . . spurred the birth of the Republican Party, with Abraham Lincoln rising as Douglas’s political opponent.*” It also identifies the political party of many featured historical figures, but it fails to identify the first three African American U.S. Senators as Republicans and the first 23 African American House members who were also Republican.

The CVC text notes that Blanche Kelso Bruce became “*a U.S. senator in 1875,*” and was “*the first African-American to preside over the Senate, in its practice of rotating Presiding Officers,*” but it failed to mention that his party affiliation was Republican.

The CVC fails to mention the historic appointment of John Rock as the first African American to the Supreme Court Bar (the Supreme Court at that time met in the Capitol) sponsored by Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts—a Republican. Sumner was also an active abolitionist who was nearly beaten to death on the floor of the U. S. Senate by pro-slavery Democrat Representative Preston Brooks from South Carolina.

To be fair, the CVC does not mention that Dionisio “Dennis” Chavez, the “*first Hispanic elected to both houses of Congress,*” Rebecca Latimer Felton, the first woman appointed to U.S. Senate and to speak as a U.S. Senator (albeit for a single day), or Hattie Ophelia Wyatt Caraway, the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate, were all Democrats. In general, party affiliations are frequently mentioned in the CVC— as with Republican Joseph McCarthy.



Part Five: Bad History and other Factual Errors

The Missouri Compromise of 1820

The CVC states that, “*The Missouri Compromise of 1820, which admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, temporarily solved the divisive issue of slavery's spread to the western territories.*”

That is an unfortunate misunderstanding of history considering that the Missouri Compromise—brought about by the Democrats who gained a majority in Congress in 1818—reversed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 which explicitly forbade slavery in the non-state territories. The result of the Compromise was an expansion of slavery as far as the Dakotas and Montana territory. Up until 1820, it is demonstrable that, as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Northwest Ordinance, the agreed goal and trend for the nation up to 1820 was to reduce and eventually eliminate slavery.

The Second American Revolution

The phrase “THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION” appears in a CVC display title about the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment giving African Americans the full right as citizens to vote. David Barton correctly pointed out that the term “The Second American Revolution” is used by most historians to reference the War of 1812, which he says was “fought largely to secure the promises made, but not kept, by the British at the end of the American Revolution.”

The CVC text remains unchanged.

Moreover, the CVC text states, “*Legislators drafted constitutional amendments abolishing slavery and giving voting rights to black men, although full civil rights would not come to African-Americans for another century.*” The CVC does not explain that the Fifteenth Amendment was only necessary because Democrats in the South ignored the intent of the Fourteenth Amendment. Here, the claim is that *statutory laws* were the reason blacks gained full civil rights, but the truth is that these rights were already written in the Constitution.

The 1824 Presidential Election

Barton reported that the CVC text states, “*The 1824 presidential election was the first one to excite high public interest and participation,*” and he goes on to point out that, without equivocation, it was actually the presidential election of 1800 between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson that was “the first one to excite high public interest and participation.”

The CVC text remains unchanged.

In that election, noted Barton, “the two-party system matured to full operation, with the Federalists of Adams being tossed over in both the House and the Senate in preference for Jefferson’s Republicans, or Anti-Federalists. Both newspapers and pamphleteers were in full swing for that election, and some of the most outrageous news coverage and electioneering ever to arise in any presidential election occurred in the election of 1800.”

Original Constitutional Amendments

The CVC text under the heading title “1789” states, “*Congress eventually passed 12. The states ratified 10 of these amendments.*” This is misleading and omits the fact that one additional amendment from the original 12 did eventually pass. Barton wrote that the “states actually ratified 11 (and not 10) of those 12 amendments; ten were immediately ratified, but the 11th was ratified in 1992, and it was part of the original 12. Therefore, of the 12 amendments introduced by the first federal Congress of 1789, 11 were ratified by the states.” Thus it is incorrect to say that ten of the twelve were ratified.

The CVC text remains unchanged.

Masonic Cornerstone Ceremony

Barton wrote, “Three times in the CVC text, the 1793 laying of the original cornerstone is described, once correctly and twice incorrectly. The correct description acknowledges that: ‘*On September 18, 1793, President George Washington laid the Capitol’s cornerstone in a ceremony attended by representatives of Masonic lodges from Maryland and Virginia, an artillery company, the city commissioners, and local residents.*’ The ceremony was official and federal, and several other groups participated, including Masonic lodges. However, the ceremony is twice incorrectly described as a “Masonic ceremony;” it was not. Rather, it was an official federal ceremony, and various groups participated at different times during the ceremony, but the Masons were not in charge – it was not their ceremony. Therefore, it is not true that “*President Washington laid the cornerstone in a Masonic ceremony on September 18.*”

The CVC text remains unchanged.



Moses Relief in the House Chamber

Conclusion

It is not hard to conclude that the planners of the CVC presented a biased view with regard to America's Godly heritage, our system of American governance, Constitutional interpretation, and ideology as demonstrated in the numerous examples above. While some may take issue with any one example, together they create an unmistakable bias. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that in many cases a rigorous standard was not applied or tested against historical fact; nor did there seem to be an effort to clearly explain many of the historical events or use prudent judgment in selecting the people or examples to best convey the historical record. Certainly, like the FDR and the World War II memorials, there was a deliberate effort to minimize our nation's Godly heritage. Furthermore, for all the emphasis on E Pluribus Unum, regrettably there is little in the CVC to create a sense of unity or patriotism.

While the space is well designed and the display arrangements are well organized, it is a shame that the 15,000 estimated people who will visit the CVC each day will be presented with a biased, unbalanced, incomplete, and in many cases, inaccurate history of America and the Capitol.



Stained Glass in the House Chapel

Addendum A

By David Barton of Wallbuilders

Ten Illustrative Errors in the CVC, representing errors both of Omission and of Fact

1. The 1824 Presidential Election

The CVC text states: “*The 1824 presidential election was the first one to excite high public interest and participation.*” Without an equivocation, it was the presidential election of 1800 between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson that was “the first one to excite high public interest and participation.” In that election, the two-party system matured to full operation, with the Federalists of Adams being tossed over in both the House and the Senate in preference for Jefferson’s Republicans, or Anti-Federalists. Both newspapers and pamphleteers were in full swing for that election, and some of the most outrageous news coverage and electioneering ever to arise in any presidential election occurred in the election of 1800. After the election, there were expansive public celebrations by Jefferson’s supporters, but among the defeated Adams’ supporters, the media had generated such shocking claims that widespread public panic overtook many of his followers. It is demonstrably false to state that the 1824 presidential election “was the first one to excite high public interest and participation.”

2. The Northwest Ordinance, 1787

The CVC text states: “*The authors of the Northwest Ordinance believed educated citizens were critical to the success of self-government. Article 3 declared, ‘... education shall forever be encouraged.’ The Northwest Ordinance, together with the earlier Land Ordinance of 1785, set aside a section of each new township's land for the support of public schools.*”

Article 3 of the Northwest Ordinance states: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

Very clearly, then, the Framers of the Northwest Ordinance did not indicate in the Ordinance that they “believed educated citizens were critical to the success of self-government”; to the contrary, they stated that they believed that “religion, morality, and knowledge” were critical to the success of self-government. Schools were not the object of the Ordinance (as indicated by the abbreviated quote in the CVC text) but instead were the means of implementing those three items of congressional concern.

3. The Three-Fifths Clause

The CVC text states: “*After the Civil War, military conflict turned into political conflict. The Constitution originally had considered a slave only three-fifths of a person.*” This is an unequivocally false statement and unfortunately has its original in sloppy modern scholarship.

During the framing of the Constitution, there was never any discussion of personhood being only three fifths. To the contrary, there was extended acknowledgement of the full and complete personhood of both slave and free blacks. The Three-Fifths Clause pertained only to population representation and not to individual worth. The debates at the Constitutional Convention makes abundantly clear that neither the intent nor the effect of the Three-Fifths Clause affected personhood (see the debates involving James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris, Luther Martin, Elbridge Gerry, and other anti-slavery delegates with the pro-slavery delegates from the South). It was an anti-slavery provision in the Constitution that resulted in the pro-slavery representation from states such as Georgia and South

Carolina was cut almost in half, for instead of having a congressional representative for every 30,000 inhabitants (including counting slaves), it now required 50,000 inhabitants to have a representative when slaves were counted – that is, using slaves for the basis of congressional representation only resulted in it being harder to send pro-slavery representatives to Congress; if slave states would free their slaves, a representative to Congress could more easily be had. Significantly, Frederick Douglass, in his subsequent anti-slavery lectures affirmed that this clause was not directed at personhood but rather at the limitation of pro-slavery representatives from the South. Modern voices have made the Three-Fifths Clause about personhood, but no record from the Constitutional Convention or the ratification debates supports such a proposition; in fact, those records clearly and unequivocally refute such a notion.

4. **Original Constitutional Amendments**

Concerning the first federal Congress of 1789, the CVC text states: “*Congress eventually passed 12. The states ratified 10 of these amendments.*” The states actually ratified 11 (and not 10) of those 12 amendments; ten were immediately ratified, but the 11 was ratified in 1992, and it was part of the original 12 (it was just that states were being added rapidly enough that the on-going ratification on this amendment was slow enough that it continued to fall just short of the three-fourths margin necessary for ratification until it became the 27th amendment in 1992; nevertheless it was part of the original 12. Therefore, of the 12 amendments introduced by the first federal Congress of 1789, 11 were ratified by the states.

5. **“We The People”**

The CVC text states: “*Preamble: sets forth the national purpose. It is issued by ‘We the People,’ rather than the states, demonstrating that popular sovereignty – the principle that governmental authority is derived from the will of the people – is the foundation of the United States.*”

To the contrary, the Constitution itself says that it is issued by the States; as Article VII (Clauses 1 & 2) acknowledges: “The ratification of the conventions of nine **States** shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the **States** so ratifying the same. Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the **States** present the seventeenth day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven . . .” And just to make sure that the role of the states in the Constitution was clearly preserved, the Tenth Amendment declared: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the **States** are reserved to the States respectively or to the people.” And according to the *Federalist Papers*, a purpose of Article I of the Constitution was to equally represent the States as well as the people – the States in the Senate, and the people in the House. There is no historical basis for stating that it was a document of the people and not of the states.

6. **Church in the Capitol**

CVC text reads: “*Opened in 1800, the building was made available to the Washington community when not in use by Congress. Religious services and other civic events were regularly held there.*”

The facts are quite the contrary of the suggestion in the text: church (which in the text is linked with other civic events) was not part of the community use of the Capitol “when not in use by Congress” – at least not the official Capitol church. While it is accurate that by 1867, four community congregations held their services in various parts of the Capitol, what is omitted here is the official church for Congress that was authorized by congressional action on December 4, 1800. Those services were administered and directed by the House and Senate chaplains, who alternated responsibilities every other week. The chaplains might preach, or they might invite someone else to preach.

In 1857, Congress listed the duties of its officers, and regarding chaplains, it noted: “At every session, two chaplains are elected – one by each House – whose duty is . . . to conduct religious services weekly in the Hall of the House of Representatives.” This was church for the Members (and many Presidents also attended the official church), but it was a church open to the entire community as well. This official church ran for the better part of a century, and it was to this official congressional church that President Thomas Jefferson sent the Marine Corp band to play the worship services.

Also ignored is the long litany of diversity that appeared in this church. For example, in 1806, Dorothy Ripley became the first woman to preach in the House church, preaching before President Thomas Jefferson who was in attendance that day (Harriet Livermore became the first woman to preach at the Capitol before four different Presidents); Bishop John England became the first Roman Catholic to preach at the church at the House; Henry Highland Garnet became the first African American to officially address the House, and he did so in a sermon in the House church; and there are many others instances. Clearly, this church was not merely the accommodation of a beneficent Congress out of deference to the community, and contrary to the description, this church was most active when the building was in use by Congress.

7. Masonic Cornerstone Ceremony

Three times in the CVC text, the 1793 laying of the original cornerstone is described, once correctly and twice incorrectly. The correct description acknowledges that: “*On September 18, 1793, President George Washington laid the Capitol's cornerstone in a ceremony attended by representatives of Masonic lodges from Maryland and Virginia, an artillery company, the city commissioners, and local residents.*” The ceremony was official and federal, and several other groups participated, including Masonic lodges. However, twice the ceremony is described as a “Masonic ceremony”; it was not; it was an official federal ceremony, and various groups participated at different times in the ceremony, but the Masons were not in charge of the ceremony. It therefore is not true that “*President Washington laid the cornerstone in a Masonic ceremony on September 18.*”

8. The Second American Revolution

For generations, and still for most historians today, the War of 1812 rather than the Fifteenth Amendment is known as “The Second American Revolution.” The War of 1812 was long seen as a continuation of the Revolutionary War because it was fought largely to secure promises made but not kept by the British at the end of the American Revolution, and therefore was titled “The Second American Revolution.”

9. The People's Branch

The CVC text states: “*With ratification in 1913 of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution, the Senate, like the House, could truly call itself ‘the people’s branch’.*”

While the means of selecting Senators changed in 1913, the purpose of the Senate did not; it definitely continued to remain the branch that represented the states (and thus it continued to have equal strength among all states in the Senate). The Senate definitely is not a refined version of the House; the House and not the Senate is “the people’s branch.” Indeed, the means of selecting Senators changed but the purpose of the Senate did not, and that purpose is still clearly defined both in the Constitution and the *Federalist Papers* as representing the states.

10. The Attestation Clause

The major part of Article VII of the Constitution states: “Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the States present the seventeenth day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand

seven hundred and eighty seven.” The CVC text manages to quote two-thirds of that part of the clause, leaving out only “in the year of our Lord,” which appears between the two parts selected from that clause in the CVC text. (CVC text: “*‘Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present,’ the Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787, first by George Washington and then by the members of each state delegation.*”) That is a lot of verbal contortion merely to circumnavigate one clause.

Addendum B

MEMORANDUM

TO: HOUSE ADMINISTRATION STAFF
FROM: REP. RANDY FORBES
SUBJECT: CVC CORRESPONDENCE
DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2008

I am hopeful that an arrangement can be reached so that HR 5159 can move forward in an expeditious manner. In my letter to the House Administration on September 26, 2008, I requested that a significant permanent display be included in the Capitol Visitor Center. To clarify what I understand that to mean, I believe that any “significant, permanent display of religious history in the Capitol, reflecting the rich tradition of prayer, acknowledgement of God, and Judeo-Christian traditions have played throughout the history of the Capitol, and comparable in size relative to the other themed displays,” would, at a minimum, include the following:

Religious History In the Capitol

#1) History of the Chaplaincy of the House and Senate to include a list of the chaplains who have served and the different faith backgrounds of each.

#2) History of the Capitol as a Church, including the fact that 1) religious services took place in the Capitol when Congress was in session and was an official function of Congress, and 2) that in 1867 the Capitol was the largest church in Washington with 2000 people attending weekly. Note: this is in opposition to statements in the CVC that say services took place when Congress was not in session; it may include

- Church bulletins/sermons, portions of John Quincy Adams’ diary about church services; Rep. Manasseh Cutler’s quotes from his diary, and quotations of attendees (Mary B. Smith);
- A list of Presidents that attended weekly church services in the Capitol;

Rich Tradition of Prayer

#3) A list of the “firsts” who preached or prayed at the Capitol and excerpts of their text, such as:

- Dorothy Ripley—first woman to preach in the Capitol (1806)—[Pres. Jefferson was in attendance];
- Bishop John England—first Catholic to preach in Capitol (John Quincy Adams present, 1826);
- Morris Raphall is first Jewish Rabbi to open the House in prayer (1860);
- Henry Highland Garnet—first African American to speak in Congress, and he preached a sermon... just two weeks after the 13th Amendment passed (Feb. 12, 1865);

Acknowledgement of God

#4) “God Bless America” on 9-11;

#5) Photos/reference to Members reading during the Annual Bible Reading/National Day of Prayer events;

#6) Congressional Resolutions Requesting Presidential Proclamations for days of Thanksgiving and Prayer (Washington and Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamations);

Judeo-Christian Traditions throughout the Capitol

#7) The Aitken Bible of 1782—"Bible of the Revolution" (with an informational placard explaining that it is the first English Bible printed in America and the first Bible ever to be printed as an Act of Congress);

#8) Lincoln's Bible; and his 2nd Inaugural address next to table at his side during the speech.

Addendum C

By United States Senator Jim DeMint



CVC Considerations and Omissions

- 1) While the CVC includes references to E Pluribus Unum, calling it our national motto, throughout the exhibits and the orientation video each visitor will view, even though it was never codified into law, there is no mention of “In God We Trust,” which was adopted as our official motto in 1956.
- 2) While the CVC mentions Jeannette Rankin, the first female member of Congress 15 times, there are only three references to Rev. Martin Luther King and no mentions of the significant role that churches played in the civil rights movement.
- 3) While the CVC includes inconsequential personal items like Senator Charles Sumner’s pocket watch, the CVC does not include items of historical and religious significance like the Aitken Bible of 1782 which was the only Bible ever printed by an act of the United States Congress.
- 4) While the CVC does reference that church services were held in the Capitol, it does not acknowledge that the services were held while Congress was in session, were attended by Members of Congress and Presidents of the United States, and that the Capitol was the largest church in Washington in 1867.
- 5) While the CVC has an entire section on “National Aspirations”, listing “unity, freedom, and general welfare” among them, it leaves out Providence and Prayer entirely, which are core commitments of the nation and its constitutional life, as the closing of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin’s call to prayer at the Constitutional Convention and presidential proclamations calling our nation to days of prayer, fasting, thanksgiving, and remembrance demonstrate.
- 6) While the Preamble to the Constitution is referenced throughout the CVC, it is never displayed in its entirety, and a core example of “the blessings of liberty” which is religious liberty is completely ignored.

- 7) While the CVC includes photos such as an AIDS rally, Earth Day event, casino grounds, and a Connecticut factory producing locomotive wheels, it does not include photos of monumental religious events at the Capitol such as National Day of Prayer events, the Annual Bible Reading Marathon on the Capitol steps, or the March for Life for which hundreds of thousands come to DC annually.
- 8) While the CVC includes the table made for Abraham Lincoln used during his 2nd Inaugural Address and a photo of the table and swearing-in, it does not include Lincoln's Bible which is also found in the photo or the actual text of his address in its entirety.
- 9) While the CVC acknowledges that 'ancient drinking horns...inspired the design' of an ornament in the Rayburn House Office Building, it does not acknowledge the religious iconography found in the Capitol and other federal buildings including Bibles, crosses, Biblical quotes, and Moses being the only lawgiver facing outward in the House Chamber.
- 10) While the CVC highlights Capitol architecture including rosettes and doorknobs with explanations and descriptions in great detail, it does not recount the religious and historical significance of all, nor show all of the 8 portraits hanging in the Rotunda which are: the Surrender of General Burgoyne, the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis, the Landing of Columbus, General George Washington Resigning His Commission, the Embarkation of the Pilgrims, Discovery of the Mississippi, Baptism of Pocahontas, and the Declaration of Independence .
- 11) While the CVC includes detailed information about Capitol services such as the Capitol post office, barbershop, carpentry shop, and the cabinet shop, as well as key people, including the Architect of the Capitol and Congress's attending physician, it does not provide a list of all House and Senate chaplains, including their faith backgrounds or say that the Prayer Room is used for 'prayer.'
- 12) While the CVC has a photo of Jeannette Rankin, the first female Member of the House, planting a tree, it does not include Members of Congress singing "God Bless America" spontaneously on the Capitol steps on 9-11.
- 13) While the CVC includes the "Suffragist," a weekly newspaper advocating women's right to vote, the CVC does not include the text of Dr. Martin Luther King's, "I have a dream" speech.
- 14) While the CVC describes Thaddeus Stevens, one of the prime Civil Rights Republicans during the American Civil War and Reconstruction, as "not particularly religious," it does not reveal that President Garfield was a preacher, that many of the framers of the Constitution were ministers, and that many other presidents were 'religious.'
- 15) While the CVC lists the "Pledge of Allegiance" during the order of business in the virtual House tour, it does not display anywhere in the Capitol Visitor Center the text of "the Pledge of Allegiance" which contains the phrase "one nation under God," an addition President Eisenhower signed into law in 1954.

16) While the CVC includes photos and captions highlighting poverty and struggles of immigrants, it does not highlight the reason many immigrants sacrificed to come to America: religious freedom.

17) While the CVC includes personal memorabilia such as a snuff box and walking stick of the Senate's Assistant doorkeeper, one who was responsible for helping maintain order on the floor of the Senate and in the galleries, it does not include the Great Seal with a full description of it, which includes several references to God and symbolizes the watchful eye of God and His favor on America's affairs.

18) While the CVC includes photos of 4th of July celebrations and photos of the American Flag, it does not include the text of our National Anthem or explain the design of our flag.

19) While the CVC does include photos depicting Native American Leaders meeting with governmental leaders, including the President, it does not include Christian and church leaders, like Billy Graham and Rev. Martin Luther King meeting with Presidents and governmental officials.