



Robert C. Byrd Center
for CONGRESSIONAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION

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The Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education Receives Major Grant from the Benedum Foundation for Expanded Civics Education

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation has awarded the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education a grant of \$136,250.00 for a new initiative that will expand civics education in West Virginia. “People Powered: Civic Action, Community Engagement, and American Representative Democracy” will launch in the fall of 2021 and will bring together the Byrd Center’s leadership in teacher training with leading learning resource creators from across the United States to deliver innovative educational materials to West Virginia teachers and students.

“People Powered” is a supplemental year-long curriculum designed to support the 10th-12th grade civics and social studies standards which are taught in schools throughout West Virginia. Grant funding will enable the Byrd Center to produce lesson plans which utilize the primary sources in its archival collections in engaging, inquiry-based learning tools to connect the broader concepts of American government and civic life with a West Virginia and Appalachian regional focus. The grant will also allow the Byrd Center to offer specialized training for teachers to incorporate these resources in their classrooms. Paired with tested learning tools from such highly regarded institutions as the National Archives and Records Administration and iCivics, “People Powered” will provide a robust resource for West Virginia educators.

The Byrd Center is uniquely positioned to lead such an initiative. For six years, the center has worked closely with teachers to discover and implement primary sources in classroom instruction, demonstrating the immense value these resources can lend to civics education. The center’s highly regarded Teacher Institute has served over 300 West Virginia teachers since its launch in 2013. From this foundation, “People Powered” will be the Byrd Center’s next step in engaging with West Virginia’s excellent educators as we work together to prepare our nation’s next generation of public leaders and engaged citizens.

Educators who are interested in using the “People Powered” program with their students during the coming academic year are invited to contact the Byrd Center to join our list of participating pilot teachers. For more information, please visit www.byrdcenter.org/people-powered.

The Benedum Foundation has served West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania since it was established in 1944 by Michael and Sarah Benedum. The foundation provides grants to support specific initiatives in the areas of education, economic development, health and human services, and community development.

The Byrd Center is a private, nonpartisan, and nonprofit educational organization located on the campus of Shepherd University. Its mission is to advance representative democracy by promoting a better understanding of the United States Congress and the Constitution through programs and research that engage citizens. The center houses an archive containing the papers of five former members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives from the state of West Virginia, including the papers of Senator Robert C. Byrd.

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