

In this episode of Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge's podcast, *George Washington Slept Here*, we're joined by civics education expert Kerry Sautner. Throughout this conversation, we'll delve into the decline in civics education, the power of primary sources, and how to bolster civic knowledge beyond classrooms. Kerry also introduces us to the interactive constitution platform and the [National Constitution Center](#), a museum designed to understand, debate, and celebrate the U.S. Constitution. Plus, we'll uncover Kerry's impactful work on criminal justice reform and the significance of understanding our nation's complex history.

.Quotes

"My passion for criminal justice was ignited by the policing project. It's not just about student impact, but the profound effect on the police officers."-Kerry Sautner

"Respect for diverse views isn't just for the youth; it's a shared responsibility. Our nation values different perspectives, and as adults, we must lead by example."- Kerry Sautner

Featured Guest

Kerry Sautner

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kerrysautner/>

Chapters:

00:02 - Introduction

03:05 - Childhood Stories & Love for History.

08:26 - Zoo Internship Sparks Teaching Career.

13:04 - Exploring the Constitution at the National Museum

17:55 - Diving into Constitutional Queries & Diverse Views.

25:25 - Legacy in Stone: Founders, Diversity, and Liberty's Tale.

30:11 - Constitution's Resonance in Modern Battles.

38:19 - Comprehensive Constitution Course Launch.

40:30 - Philadelphia's Story-Driven Police Training from 2015.

45:54 - The Power of Narratives Driving Criminal Justice Reform

53:36 - Promoting Child-Centric Reading & Civic Education

01:00:02 - Civic Responsibility & Common Ground.

01:04:52 - Educators Promoting Respect & Diversity.

01:10:03 - Outro

Transcript:

Intro:

We the people of the United States. A House divided against itself cannot stand. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Jason Raia:

Hello and welcome to *George Washington Slept Here*, a new civic education podcast from Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, where we will explore American history, civic education, and the idea of liberty through conversations with some of our favorite thinkers, writers, and leaders. I'm Jason Raia, Chief Operating Officer at Freedoms Foundation and this week's host of *George Washington Slept Here*. In this new civic and history education podcast, the format is simple, a long form conversation with a friend of Freedoms Foundation where we can learn something new. Before we go any further, a little housekeeping, we encourage everyone to subscribe to *George Washington Slept Here* to make sure you get every new episode as soon as it is out. And we love hearing from listeners, so please email us at gwshpodcast@gmail.com with your comments, questions, or suggestions and hit us up at Freedoms Foundation's social media @FFVF on Twitter and on Facebook and Instagram @FreedomsFoundation. Today's interview is with longtime friend of Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Dr. Kerry Sautner of the National Constitution Center. Hello Kerry.

Kerry Sautner:

Hi. It's wonderful to be here.

Jason Raia:

It's great to have you here. Our conversation today is going to be structured in a way to keep us on track. We want to explore your origin story. How did you become the person sitting here before us? Your current work and what is taking up the bulk of your time now? And then I want to explore the state of civic education today. Finally, we will end with a quiz, which hopefully we will learn something new about you at the end of our conversation. So, on to your origin story. Kerry, tell us where you were born and raised.

Kerry Sautner:

Oh, this is fantastic. So thank you so much for having me here. This is an amazing experience, and I love the title of your podcast. It's brilliant. It's a fantastic thing. And something that everybody across the country can relate to. There's always a story about, oh, George Washington came here. Even when you historically know it is impossible.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

It's still really fun. And I love that. That's the idea of storytelling around the way.

Jason Raia:

And that was exactly it. And our colleague, Carolyn, is the one when we were brainstorming

about the podcast and titles. She's the one who came up with it. And it was really on this idea that he was the great uniter. Everybody, every tavern, every place wanted to claim that George Washington had been there. And then they put up their brass plaque, and you can travel. Like you said, there's no possible way. There weren't enough days in his life or have visited all of these places and slept there, but everybody wanted to claim that. And that's part of what the Freedoms Foundation is really preoccupied by is how do we get back to a place where we feel united. What can we unite around? And that's part of what we're gonna talk about later. But tell us where you're from and where you grew up and what your greatest influences were.

Kerry Sautner:

Great. So I'm actually from the neighborhood or your neighborhood, I should say, for people that are listening in other places. I grew up in Ardmore. So my parents were small business owners, and they kept extending their business. So half my childhood is in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. So right about 10 minutes outside of Philadelphia, and then the other half of my childhood is West Chester, Pennsylvania. So a little bit of, you know, 5 different schools in 5 different years.

Jason Raia:

Oh, wow.

Kerry Sautner:

But, you know, it really helped me make sure that I could talk to anybody no matter where I was because if you're the new kid, you have to learn how to say, hi, I am and introduce yourself. So I really kind of grew up in this area then really what influenced me around the work that I do today is this love of storytelling, this idea that as you shared in the opening. That there's always a moment that happened in this place that happened in this area, maybe from 2000 years ago, or it may be from 20 days ago, but that's a fascinating thing when we talk about civics, when we talk about history, is to understand what happened before us and how are those echoes from the past affecting our lives today. So moving around a lot, you get a tendency to find out what to know about the neighborhood. Sometimes more than people that grew up there because it's new to you. So you wanna understand that kind of meaning. I loved my 9th grade history teacher in West Chester because he grew up in West Chester, and it looked very different than when I was there. And so he would bring in all these old pictures. And it was all farmland and woods, and it was so, so different. And we were talking about going to the mall, and he's like, that used to be this guy's farm but it opened up this idea that land has a lot of stories to tell. And how can you dig into it? And how can you investigate and ask questions about it? And then understand why they've built it the way it is today and what maybe you wanna bring it back to in the past.

Jason Raia:

Right. You know, I wanted to just season something you said about being a new person. I remember I grew up in Florida, which has a different kind of history, but it's not the national American story that we know from up here. But I ended up going to Boston for school. And so I was desperate to learn as much as I could because this was the history I'd read in my history books. And so going to the USS Constitution or Paul Revere's house or Old North Church and what I learned later as I finished school and began teaching up there was how easy it is when you live in a place like that to miss those stories, because you know, it's it's the people who drive through Valley Forge Park every day. And go, oh, yeah, I go to Valley Forge. It's like,

well, have you ever stopped? Like, have you ever looked at one of those huts? Have you you've been on the parade trail? And we don't because it's such a part - But new people who come in, you know, have these new eyes and they go to explore it. And that's one of the things that I think is really neat. But before we move on, I love this idea of storytelling, but I'm curious how you, you know, we know what you're doing today, but a B.S. in biology and marine science? So what is that about?

Kerry Sautner:

I know. Always, you know, if you don't have anything to talk about at a party, it's always my big opener. Like, do you know, I have a marine biology undergrad? My father is a big fisherman. Like, always on a boat, and I'm the youngest of four. So when you're the youngest of four, you don't have a lot of choices when you're little. Like, everybody else is going here. I'm going there, and you're just going wherever a parent takes you. And so my dad would constantly be like, I'm going on the boat and you're coming with me. So I was always perpetually on the boat with him. So I grew up, like, obsessed with the waves and water. And my dad's a really good teacher. He would every single time he caught a fish, he would, you know, show you what to do with it, but he'd also, and I think this is gonna gross out everybody, but he'd also open the stomach.

Jason Raia:

Sure.

Kerry Sautner:

Because to understand how to catch more and what was going on. You needed to understand what they were eating. So it was basically like a mini dissection lab, and I loved it.

Jason Raia:

Sort of like that great scene from *Jaws*.

Kerry Sautner:

Okay. So *Jaws* is one of my top 10 movies. And to be honest with you, I always side it with the shark. Just to be clear, I don't know how you watch that and not side with the shark just to be on top of it.

Jason Raia:

I love it. And, then recently I learned that that is actually based on a story that happened here on the Jersey shore and the Delaware River and the shark attacks back in the 1920's. And you talk about storytelling and history, and it's like here's this pop culture phenomenon that we all grew up with, and we find out, oh, wait, there's a moment in history that is real. You know, that, that story and you talk about story time. So I wanna explore that some more with you. But –

Kerry Sautner:

And we can talk about Atlantic City and that –

Jason Raia:

There we go.

Kerry Sautner:

—it was, like, 21, I think, was, like, the number of shark attack in one season. There's so much social history going on. It's like the first time people were in the water too.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

And I love Atlantic City. So if anybody is around it, it has the best history. I lived there for a while too.

Jason Raia:

So you do your undergraduate in marine biology and eventually you wind up in museum education, a doctorate in educational leadership. How did you make the transition from undergraduate to this idea of storytelling of museums of history and wanting to make that your career?

Kerry Sautner:

So I wound up working at the — it was actually an internship when I was in, like, my first year freshman in college that I interned at the zoo. I intered and I did a zoo on wheels, which was a fantastic experience, you know, basically schlepping animals across the entire area, and it was wonderful. I also learned that I'm perpetually lost because I have terrible direction abilities, even when, you know, exactly where you're going. But I loved talking to people, and I loved working with people and teaching them things. So when I I lived in Ireland for a while, that's a different story, different podcast, came home. I didn't know what to do. I worked in a lab. Really, you can imagine me in a lab. It was just not the scene for me. I wound up working at the Franklin Institute, and I loved teaching. That's really what taught me what I love to do. All that, you know, skills of moving around as a kid and talking to people. I put it there, took my degree, took the Franklin Institute, and I kind of jammed them all together. So having that ability to talk to people, to engage with people to ask questions, to listen to them, all of those pieces. I found a sweet spot. And so I was there. I wound up getting a master's in elementary ed, general education degree to really think about how do we teach better? How do we teach students the way that really supports their learning and their experiences? And at that time, the Franklin Institute, I mean, the Constitution Center was just being built. And so my former boss, Phil Castellano, went over to open up this new building, actually, to build the new building. And about three years in, he called and said, do you know what you do? And I was like, hello? Yes. hi, Phil. You know, I've talked to you for a year. And he's like, you know what you do? And I'm like, teach. He's like, yeah. Did you ever thought about doing it in history? And I absolutely love the idea. I sat on it for about a year, and then I made the transition over. And I will tell you the universe always gives me a favor when I make big transitions. So I worked at the Franklin Institute for eight years. The first exhibit at the Constitution Center that I worked on was the Ben Franklin exhibit. And I was like, thank you, because this is my sweet spot. I know everything about Ben Franklin, every part of his history, but really when you're a good teacher, you look for those good stories that move

people. And so that's my through line. It's not science. It's definitely that I love science. I love history. I love the Constitution, but what I'm really looking for is the stories that help move people. And then also what I've learned with my last degree, my doctorate was really about story sharing. So it's not just the people from the past. It's the people today. And how do they share their stories with each other? So you can build upon the stories of the past. You can build upon your own story and move it to something that is set for our future and set for us to move forward.

Jason Raia:

And I think that's really important. And it's one of the things that we try to do here with our Spirit of America program, the high school program where we teach about the Constitution and try to give them the historical context, but then we very quickly try to draw them to the modern day and say, let's talk about how the Constitution affects your life today. It is that, you know, the history and how it intersects with our daily lives and, that's one of the things the Constitution is, in some ways unique because it's this, you know, almost 250 old document, but it in many ways dictates our life today. And I think that's one of, for me, one of the things that's really fascinating about it. So you end up at the National Constitution Center fairly early in its mission. I remember, my first visit was around 2005. I was doing a program, NEH program on Johann Sebastian Bach, up at Moravian College. And we came down and listened to, it was probably a very early podcast, recorded live with an audience at, you know, I think it was a speaker or something, but, at the Constitution Center was an opportunity to see the new national museum on the Constitution. For our listeners, tell what the NCC does, what its mission is and I'll give you 2 things: one, Freedom Rising, you have to tell us about it because we love bringing students there and they absolutely it's one of their best memories when they go home. And then, of course, you're, you're you have a rotating exhibit every year. And right now, it's on the 19th Amendment. So tell us about just the core mission of what the National Constitution Center does.

Kerry Sautner:

Sure. So it is a national museum that teaches all about the United States Constitution where nonpartisan, apolitical, non-profit, non-government. I have so many adjectives for us, but it really because all those pieces matter. You know, it really is so unbelievably important. So in 1988, it was in the anniv- the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution. 1787. The constitution is signed 100 years later. People get together and they're like, you know what? We should do something for this big anniversary. That's 1887. They literally talked about it for 101 years. So when we talk about slow progress in our government facilities, yes, Sometimes it's really slow. So they brought it back up in 1987 and they spoke about it in Congress for over a year but this was huge. It was an act by Congress, a bipartisan act, that was signed by Reagan that said that there will be a place within walking distance of Independence Hall that is nonpartisan that will teach all about the United States Constitution. So that was signed on 8- 1988. And that's a huge important year for our founding. Our building's not open till 2003. It takes that much time because we're nonpartisan, nongovernment. We don't really get a lot of government grants. It's through all other fundraising work. It takes us that long to open the building. We're on the most historic square mile in America. So you can imagine the archaeological dig site that we're on.

Jason Raia:

Oh, I can imagine.

Kerry Sautner:

Again, that science degree came in really handy there. Talking about the dig site is one of the most important dig sites in the entire United States and the world. When talking to the National Park Service, which is the land that we sit on, I had to ask them that question, like, wait, what? Like, say that again. One of the richest dig sites in the world because my brain goes to, like, Egypt or something like that. It is up there with those. It's such a powerful site. We have the Lenape Indians that live there for thousand of years. We are in one of the most diverse square blocks in America, so many people lived on it, and it was intergenerational and interracial. One of the first African American churches in Philadelphia is on our land. It's so unbelievably powerful. So many layers of history. It takes us very long to open it up. It opened on July 4 2003, and my running joke is just to confuse people because that is not our birthday. Our birthday is September 17th.

Jason Raia:

That's right.

Kerry Sautner:

So Constitution Day is September 17th.

Jason Raia:

But you open on the declaration day.

Kerry Sautner:

We do. And that was to get the summer crowd, let's be honest.

Jason Raia:

Sure. Right. And that's and that's, you know, and until what was it, Senator Byrd, you know, September 17th wasn't exactly celebrated as a holiday. July 4th was. And so it totally makes sense. But as all of our listeners will know, September 17th, is signing day for the Constitution and when we celebrate the Constitution. So you were just a little, couple months early.

Kerry Sautner:

Yeah. So it, it really, it's a place to talk all about the Constitution and the Constitutional history around it. Sometimes people think, oh, you're talking about the Constitution. You know, you talk about the 1st amendment. Of course, we do. But we need to preface it with the historical founding as well. So the museum was really our first launch. And then we've built that out to a national platform. Civic education is a huge initiative that's really the- I oversee the museum and all the education that happens every day in the museum and then all the national education as well. So we reach thousands and thousands of students in person, at the museum, online, and millions throughout the year. Our website is the third most visited museum website in the nation.

Jason Raia:

Wow.

Kerry Sautner:

That's because people really wanna understand the Constitution. And when they go to the Constitution, they wanna understand different perspectives.

Jason Raia:

Right. And there's a couple of ways that you do that and, including classroom resources, including your interactive Constitution, which I know your boss, Jeffrey Rosen, has spent literally years now talking about, but it's such an accomplishment, because it examines each almost clause of the Constitution with wonderful scholars from both left and right, talking about how they see it so that you get this nonpartisan understanding that that's the key to the Constitution is its interpretation, and there are different interpretations. And so being able to share, you know, both sides is something you all have done really, really well.

Kerry Sautner:

Yeah. And it is. It's every single clause. So what we did with that interactive Constitution, and you did a perfect job teasing that up. Thank you so much. It's really about viewpoint diversity. And it's around Constitutional questions. So we're not talking about the political questions. Our job is to focus everybody to look at what are those Constitutional questions? Where in Constitution is the government given power to do that? Where in the Constitution is the government limited from doing that? And then my favorite is, it's complicated. There are some gray spots, too, because most of the time kids ask questions, they are the hardest Constitutional –

Jason Raia:

Right. They're never asking the easy ones.

Kerry Sautner:

Nope. Never easy. And it's like, uh, it's complicated. And then you dive into it. That's what our scholars do. So we paired up the best scholars on multiple sides. So there's lots of different perspectives. It's viewpoint diversity, but what we made them do first is what we need to do as a democracy talk about all the things we agree upon first.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

So you start with where we agree, and then you go to the divergent views. So we asked them all to rate a joint explainer that they cosign on, say, the second amendment. Where do they all agree? What you would think were ideologically completely opposites. They agree upon a lot. And then two separate essays. One from each on where they see the law going next, those Constitutional questions, and what's next on the docket for the the court for our country, for Congress, for our people. And that's why people come to us so much because they wanna see the whole story and not just one perspective over the other. And that is, you know, that is our sweet spot. We wanna make sure we're talking about the Constitution. We're bringing the

stories of the past, but we're showing that viewpoint diversity. So you make your own mind. You add to the story and you see which way you believe, and you actually wind up walking away saying, Oh, you know what? Everybody makes really good points on this front.

Jason Raia:

And the interactive Constitution, how does somebody find it from home if they want to see it and read some of those articles?

Kerry Sautner:

Perfect. So it's constitutioncenter.org, and you can also just Google "Interactive Constitution" and it's gonna be at constitutioncenter.org's website and dive into it. You can go to any single part of the Constitution. Every single part has at least 3 explainers. So comment, interpretation, and then matters of debate. The 14th Amendment is way more than that because we break it down by clause, but it will say that the 3rd Amendment only has one. So if you don't know why we're laughing, look it up, and then you'll get it

Jason Raia:

That's right. We'll just leave that as an inside joke that everybody can come inside and find out about. So, that's one of the online resources but I wanna take a step back and ask you if you walk through the front doors, if you are here physically in Philadelphia on the most historic mile, the what we know is Independence Mall. And as you described, there's the National Constitution Center on one side, and there's Independence Hall at the opposite and between them, you know, is the visitor center and the Liberty Bell and the President's house. And there is also, you know, the national, Jewish American History Museum. There is a federal court. There is the mint. There's just so much here. And then a couple blocks down we have the museum and the American Revolution from the Independence Hall. It's an incredible place. If people come to Philadelphia and they stand in front of the National Constitution Center, and they walk through those glass doors. What is there for them to see? What do they need to do?

Kerry Sautner:

So many things. So come join us. We have multiple free days as well. So there's always ways to come to the center. I think my top favorites when you come in are and you referenced it earlier is *Freedom Rising*. So it's a seventeen minute long theatrical production. It's a gorgeous immersive theater. There's a live actor and they narrate you through American history. And what is so unbelievably powerful is the question that you leave with. You know, we're not always here to give everybody the answer, but we are here to make you think. And that's what I love about *Freedom Rising*. It's so unbelievably powerful, it has highs and lows of American history, which American history has so many highs and lows, moments of great inspiration and moments of tragic choices that we have made in our past. *Freedom Rising* leaves the baton in your hand and asks what would you do with freedom and that is the role of everyone in this country. Every single person, what's your job, what's your role, absolutely know your rights, but also with those rights, recognize that you have responsibilities. And our democracy doesn't work unless we're involved and we're engaged. And we're, you know, reading about the Constitution, but then talking about it too and listening to each other on it. So the other favorites that people will love, and it's so hard to pick favorites in there. Signer's Hall, everybody loves it, it mirrors Independence Hall. So you walk into Independence Hall and you see the room where it happened, you know, there's chairs, there's tables, it's gorgeous. You come to our side of the

museum, and you see the people that were in the room. So we're the men that were in the room.

Jason Raia:

And those statues are amazing. And one of the things is that when we send a lot of fifth graders there from our schools that send their fifth grade here to Freedoms Foundation, and they love that for a lot of them, they're just about as tall as Jimmy Madison or Alexander Hamilton. They're going, wait. They were this then you have George Washington. standing behind the desk. And it is just this opportunity for the founders to become just a little bit more real in these amazing statues. And to better understand, like you said, what happened in the room where it happened just a, what, half mile, not even, the, third of the mile down the down the the mall. And the kids love it. They can sit on, you know, Ben Franklin's lap, they can sort of stand back to back with Jimmy Madison. They can figure out who Button Gwinnett is. It's great.

Kerry Sautner:

It is. So it's supposed to be the moment you walk into the room at the moment of the signing of the United States Constitution. So September 17, 1787. And what I love about it is there's a one of the signers, and he's handing you the pen. And he's asking you that question, again, back to questions, do you choose to sign? And that question has grappled with our visitors for years. You know, so many people come and say, yes. I'm gonna choose to sign. And some people say, would I even be allowed to sign? What depends when? That was one of my favorite things we did this program with students years ago. And one of the kids turned around, I don't think they would have let me sign. And I just thought of how powerful, how much is he thinking differently about this? But what I love in the room so that everybody's, like, Jason said, all to scale to size, accurate, kind of where they would have been hanging out with each other, Washington at the front. The three in the back are gotta be my favorite, the dissenters.

Jason Raia:

Yes.

Kerry Sautner:

So we have the three dissenters in the back, and they look annoyed. And that's what my favorite part is. You're right. It captures the people. And that's why everybody loves it. And when they first built that room, they thought it was gonna be like a shrine that people will come in and it'd be quiet. Almost like you were, like, lighting candles, and it would be they had to keep the lights real low. the first group came in, it was probably your group, 5th graders.

Jason Raia:

I'm sure.

Kerry Sautner:

And they instantly start touching everybody.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

And that's what it is. You're putting humanity back in the people. So they aren't these –

Jason Raia:

There's a physicality to it.

Kerry Sautner:

Exactly.

Jason Raia:

That you don't often get in history. And I, for the most part, I, I love real history as opposed to recreated, but this is one of those moments where the recreation, the creating these statues, just bridges the divide between then and now in a way that is really special. I love the dissenters, because one of the most important messages we can give to young American citizens is that the founders were not a monolith, you know, that there was disagreement. We know this. There are the compromises that they make that gets them to September 17th. And some of them are awful compromises. We always remember that for them, priority was union. It was creating the nation, and then they would solve all its problems later. And that's the other thing that I love about that young man's question about, you know, you know, they probably wouldn't have let me sign is I always then wanna follow that up when students you know, have that kind of insight and say, but today, you could. And that's the beauty of this document that they created is that it expanded liberty over time. Maybe not as quickly as we would love to have done it. But ultimately, the story is the expanding liberty, bringing more and more and more people under the umbrella of the Constitution that more people after the decades, after the centuries are invited to participate in the liberty that the founders were trying to secure as poorly as they may have done it. Their aspirations were there. And they managed in five pages to set the foundation that would allow all, you know, all the many people who were able to join, in the blessings of liberty as the the founders wrote it themselves. So I think that's wonderful. Tell us about the rotating exhibit. The 19th Amendment really, you know, here's one of those opportunities to let more people enjoy freedom is the 19th Amendment, but good lord, it was a long road getting there.

Kerry Sautner:

And that before you walk into the 19th Amendment, as you go through the exhibits, you're gonna walk through the Civil War and reconstruction exhibit. So I cannot talk about the 19th without talking about that because they're so historically connected, the two. So reconstruction time period is after the Civil War, this amazing experiment in interracial democracy and the crushing blows through racism in America that stopped it, but we did go through this time period with 3 amazing amendments. The 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments. 13th ended slavery, 14th adds, the Declaration of Independence promised finally into the document with an equality of liberty and freedom, and 15th Amendment voting rights. So when we think about those pieces and we tell the stories of the people that fought for those, they're so strongly connected to the 19th Amendment and the women's fight for equality. We think of the 19th Amendment as the women's rights for vote. But that exhibits more than just the vote. The vote's the output of this

fight, but it's really about this long struggle for women in this country to fight for equality. We talk about and this blows kids mind this idea of coverture, that women didn't have a voice that they were covered by their husbands or their fathers. This is something that's so far and that when we teach, like, younger students about what they have they pause us and go, wait. Say that again. It's just --

Jason Raia:

Right. It doesn't make any sense anymore because it has fundamentally changed how our society operates. It's hard to imagine, the way it was.

Kerry Sautner:

It was. And those two exhibits, the reason I pull them out as connected is because the story lines are connected. The people are connected. Frederick Douglass is in the first exhibit and the second exhibit. You know, all these major players.

Jason Raia:

Well, then there's that, you know, there's almost a deal. Women were the first abolitionists in many, many ways, but there's this deal that we're gonna support abolition first, and then we will move for women's equality and voting for all, but it's and it's not it's not a smooth deal. It's not one that many reject. If I remember correctly, I think this weekend, we just celebrated the Sojourner Truth's great speech, the anniversary of her "Ain't I a Woman" speech. And so there are, it's all mixing together in the middle of the 19th century. Abolition and women's equality and this idea that we need to fulfill the promise of the founders.

Kerry Sautner:

Absolutely. And ensuring going back to what you said earlier, ensuring that this doc- document not easily, but has the ability to change and to write a wrong that it didn't have before these ideas that there should be this promise of the Declaration into the document and how does that work for different people and what's the the legality around it. But you can't separate the stories by Amendment. You have to tell the whole story together. And then the question that each exhibit leaves you on is, what are these quest - how are these questions being addressed today? Because like you said before, yes, it's so different, but people are still fighting for equality today. Women are still fighting for rights today. And where are those tension points? So the 19th Amendment ends talking about the ERA, and the equal rights amendment and conversations are around that amendment. And so everything is connected. The past is connected to the present and connected to the person as well. Showing multiple perspectives on these exhibits, these artifacts, and also the legality and what the courts are ruling around today. So really interesting, great for conversation and discussion, but you can't walk through any of these exhibits without remembering how that beautiful document begins "we the people."

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

And that's the brilliance. Like, that's the brilliance and the humility of that document is. We'll figure it out but we're gonna start with a high, high bar and say it's powered by we. It's powered by us, we, the people.

Jason Raia:

Right. Absolutely. That that is one of the interpretive keys is we, the people, is an and, ultimately, it is the people who get to interpret. We talk about institutions like the courts and the Supreme Court and and the, the executive and Congress, but all of those are proxies for we, the people. And I think that's one of the enduring legacies of the Constitution. We talked about the interactive Constitution. I wanna get just a couple more things about the NCC, and then we're gonna dive into talking about, just civic education today as a subject itself. But, you have the live interactive classroom in Constitution 101 which are a couple of those ways that you reach out well beyond the walls of the building in downtown Philadelphia. Tell us about those?

Kerry Sautner:

So our live programs, or our classes, are exchanges. We started them about six years ago, and the idea was, you know, you can talk about the Constitution with people that think like you, the hard part is talking about the Constitution with people that don't think like you. And that skill you need as an adult. Some of our adults don't have that right now. You know, maybe we need to be working on it at every age. So we started a program where we bought classrooms around the country together. And via Zoom, it was great. Back then, nobody knew what Zoom was.

Jason Raia:

That's right.

Kerry Sautner:

And it was hysterical. Like, I remember my staff going, it's kinda like Skype. It's a little different, like, explaining what it was, but the idea that we pose a Constitutional question that we'd bring in experts and expert educators, and the students would talk to each other and ask questions and have a Constitutional dialogue around these big issues. Hate speech is one. They always wanna talk about the 1st Amendment. They wanna understand what hate speech means, understand where their 1st Amendment came from and how it has been tested over time. That's a big one. The 4th Amendment is another one that students really, really engage with.

Jason Raia:

The right to privacy. And what does that mean?

Kerry Sautner:

What does that mean? Yeah!

Jason Raia:

Because the words we know are to be secure in one's papers. That's that, you know, and it is that question of, well, what do we mean by it today when we carry around a computer in our pocket that it's more powerful than the one that got us to the moon? And we have our entire

digital lives. And so how does this document written almost 250 years ago in this 4th Amendment apply to that and offer us protections? And that's fascinating stuff.

Kerry Sautner:

It is so fascinating. And oddly enough, all the big cases tend to have phones in them, even, like, Katz's case, like, back in the day, but I will say explaining to students today what a phone booth is has been really fun.

Jason Raia:

We do the same thing. We do Katz in our in our Congressional debate and we always have to explain, what a phone booth is, number one, at the but then this brilliant idea this, you know, that it by closing the door, you, you have changed functionally you know, whether you have access to the 4th Amendment or not in your conversation.

Kerry Sautner:

Expectation of privacy.

Jason Raia:

Exactly. And it's wonderful, but you have to know that historical context to understand this interpretation of the 4th Amendment. And that's one of the things that we're, you know, we're also both of our organizations are teaching is this is not just a document that was created in a vacuum and interpreted in vacuum. It's always taking place in historical moments that something happens. It's challenged. It winds up in the courts, but the circumstance in which the incident happened influences how we understand the words that were written all the all those years ago.

Kerry Sautner:

Absolutely. And it helps you understand the layers because it's like you said, it's not this and then. And you're not looking 1787 to this moment right now. You're looking at all the layers in between. It reminds me of, like, how you teach math. you know, you step up in math and you understand and you look at the past and you say, is this formula gonna work, or is this formula gonna work? The courts do that too. And that really empowers our kids to apply their own understanding to it. So that is our live classes. Our live classes have been for classrooms today the same way. We do live virtual programs, and we do public exchanges. You know, for the private exchanges, we bring in judges and lawyers and scholars so the students get to ask people who really do the work.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

But it's like, for the public exchanges, we get to bring in some historic and law superstars. So, you know, Justice Gorsuch, Justice Breyer, so many, Martha Jones, who is, like, one of my favorite storytellers, and Ali Velshi is coming. Lots of different people. around those topics, and

they're experts just like the interactive Constitution has a ton of different experts that we tap into. We do the same with the classes. We also want kids to be exposed to the best scholarship because when you are exposed to the best scholarship, two things have happened. One, you learn and you all learn together and can really increase our own knowledge. But, two, what we've heard from our students is that they begin to feel really proud that they can handle the Constitution with this expert. That means they can handle it at their kitchen table, in their school lunchroom table or in, like, college or their career.

Jason Raia:

Well, and that's and that's really important because it is not just that, you know, you're providing them with a primer that is, oh, here's the basics of what you need to know. But instead, there's this give and take, and that a true scholar of the Constitution brings to those conversations. I know a fair bit about the Constitution, but I know that when we bring in Bruce Murphy and Graham Lee, that their wealth of research and study and it just comes out when students ask their questions in a way that is just that interaction. And you always and this is one of the things we love about doing live programs in person is that at that break where students come up to the scholar and they wanna ask them a question privately and and continue the conversation. But it's that it's the dialectic of conversation with a scholar that makes these kinds of programs really, really important. Constitution 101. This is relatively new. I think Jeffrey just had a piece in Time magazine recently with Sal Khan of Khan Academy and, really, it was about civic education, but about this idea of the Constitution 101 program, if I'm not mistaken.

Kerry Sautner:

Full curriculum. So we launched it as a big year for us. We launched a full curriculum in September for Constitution Day. For high school students, it's a 15 week course on the Constitution. It is free. All of our programs are free. The ones I just mentioned, the museum visits have free programs for school groups and free days as well. We try to make sure that there's no barrier to your Constitution. So Constitution 101 is a full curriculum. It has instructional videos. It has primary sources. It has a ton of materials. It's online now. You can go to constitutioncenter.org and check out Constitution 101 and dive into it. It's connected to our founder's library, which has 170 primary source documents that we built into the course and 50 court cases. We did the same thing we did with the interactive Constitution. We worked with top scholars in their area that were ideologically opposed and asked them to pick the best primary sources. So we have, like, two scholars that are in the civil reconstruction time period. And we said, okay. You two come from totally different perspectives. work together and pick your top 10 primary sources and that every student in this country should know. What I learned really quickly is they couldn't pick 10. We got way more than we realized, and we added more and more, but it is an unbelievably beautiful diverse tool, and it's fed into the curriculum. Curriculum helps the teachers be able to teach it, assign materials at night. We're working with Khan Academy now to build a student facing program on the Khan platform that will be launched next year. And then we're moving into middle school. That'll be the following year and then for elementary, we'll eventually get there.

Jason Raia:

Yep. Absolutely! So one more program at NCC that I want to get to because I think it is a transition, to giving you the opportunity to talk about what's coming next for you professionally. But there's a program that I did not know about, but, "Policing in a More Perfect Union." This is

with the Philadelphia Police Department. And tell us about that because I'm intrigued by the idea.

Kerry Sautner:

So this is what I did with my doctorate. I got to research the efficacy of using storytelling to teach police officers and new recruits about fairness and justice in America. So this idea of what we've been talking about the whole time is this amazing document and how we, the people, have infused it with our beliefs from our founding to our beliefs from today and understanding what is just unfair. So we launched the program in 2015, it was a joint program with the Philadelphia Police Department. I worked with Commissioner Ramsey at the time to build this program to really dive into our past. And we were going through the center and talking about, you know, our American history and understanding history. And we stumbled upon the question of how come when one person sees a person in uniform, a police officer, they have a positive connotation. And somebody else sees a person in uniform and they have a negative connotation. We shouldn't just say don't think like that or do think like that. We should say why. Where does this come from? So when you unpack American history and you unpack the history of slavery in America and you unpack race relations in America, and the use of law and police around those conversations, you start to understand where the why comes from, and you start to see how it affects some people differently and affects people in different ways. And how do we understand that? So the entire program goes from 1600's America to today. And we begin talking about the founding of our country and the ideas behind it and the meaning of justice and fairness in the 1600-1700s. We engage in the reconstruction time period, but we also work in storytelling and story sharing. So the recruits, we launched it with recruits, really talked about what it meant to them? Why did they choose this field where they were coming from? And what we found during that first kind of story sharing time is they all thought they were identical, and they really quickly find out that they have very different perspectives too. So you have to start with yourself. You know, I'm a social constructivist educator by nature. That means you build things by your own lived experiences and you build your own understanding, and you don't really get a chance, especially police officers, don't get a chance to talk about this stuff. And they should and they should understand where this comes from, they in no way have to hold any guilt for the past of America, but they need to be equipped with understanding that people see them differently because of the uniform. And so they needed to share it with each other. It ends with our students in Philadelphia high schools running a civil dialogue with the police officers and answering questions asking questions and having them engage in dialogue around the future of policing in a democratic society and what does that look like? And I will tell you that is the absolute best part of that program is to create a place in space for our young people of Philadelphia and our and our city. And now in multiple states that are doing this, to engage in that dialogue and to lead that dialogue with a sense of authority, but also a sense of optimism and hope. It is so powerful. We've trained every Philadelphia police officer since 2015, every Camden County, and Camden City police officer, and we work with Prince George County in Virginia as well. And we bring in students from every community to be able to engage in these dialogues. But, you know, to think about it, police have a hard job and probably some of the hardest people they engage with are teenagers. Why shouldn't we practice talking to each other? In a safe setting first.

Jason Raia:

And one of it sounds like one of the things that is happening there is its civil discourse at its core, and this opportunity for people just to talk to one another. And as we know, we all have places where we agree and places where we disagree. And so to be able to bring different

groups of people together, to talk, regardless of the topic is really important. But when it is such an important group of people, like our police, we want them to be able to to engage, and we want people to be able to to talk to them and bring young people. That's gonna be the kind of thing that is, you know, that they remember for the rest of their life and that these young people I'm sure in some ways fundamentally changes their interaction with all police officers because they had this opportunity to actually meet someone, not in a negative - you did something wrong, and so you are, you know, that you're that there's a reaction there, but instead, it's through this program. But what I was leading to and what, people may not know is you're about to leave the National Constitution Center for a really wonderful opportunity at one of my favorite historic sites in, all of Philadelphia, and that is Eastern State Penitentiary, which for locals may think that it's just a Halloween, you know, a haunted Halloween site. But it's actually this phenomenal, historic site. And so tell us about that.

Kerry Sautner:

Yeah. My love for understanding the criminal justice system and criminal justice reform really was sparked by the work on the policing project. And I think what was most powerful for me is it's really not what the students get out of it. It's what the police officers get out of it. That's that's the needle that those kids are changing, that there's an understanding of the rights and responsibilities in the authority that a fifteen year old has walking down the street in any part of this country that, really is powerful and to watch students kind of do that work and the thing that really moved the needle on that was first person storytelling. And that is the amazing work of the Eastern State Penitentiary historic site really does. Is it how it empowers people from the past and today to share their story. So we can look upon systems in our country and talk about what's working and what's not working. And so I feel such amazing love for the Constitution Center. So I will always be the biggest champion for the Constitution Center. And it feels like I'm leaving home. I'm not gonna lie on that, but it is amazing work that Eastern State is doing and really advancing that idea. This was the first penitentiary in the United States, the first in Philadelphia, and it was really about reforming the criminal system. It's not working. It's not right. We have to change something. The change had unbelievable negative implications and a long story of violence towards people, both victims and people that were incarcerated and some that were both at the same time. And but really what drew me to this work is really about empowering people to tell their story and to fix something and make it better. That's what we do as citizens in this country. That's what we do as Americans. We say, this is amazing. We need to make it stronger, our society, what are the pieces that aren't working? Let me jump in and let me figure out how to make it better and really work it. And nothing is more powerful. I was at a conference a week ago and two formerly incarcerated people were speaking for Eastern State Penitentiary. These people were unbelievably powerful telling their story and telling how they have done so much work to ensure that the system changes. And in any way that I can lend support to that work that I can create place and space, for people's stories to be heard, for people's stories to move others, I'm gonna do it. And this seems like a great opportunity. And criminal justice reform is, again, a multi-partisan project.

Jason Raia:

Right. It's one of those places where you have some really surprising agreement between partisans, you know, that left and right, and center, you know, there is this venn diagram where there is some real agreement there. And so it's a fascinating policy idea. We will definitely, at some point, have you back once you've settled in over there, as its new president too, to talk about the good you're doing there. But I wanna jump into civics education today. You and I have been in this world for a long time. And just, in the last couple of weeks, the NAEP scores came

out, the nation's report card. It was you were quoted in a number of places, NPR, and and some, ed weekly or a couple of things. We know, so for those who don't know, every 4 years, 8th graders, particularly, but, and high schoolers are tested, they are tested in an array of subjects, and then it is meant to give a snapshot of how American students are doing. they released, I guess, the math and english scores in the fall. This is from 2022. So last year's test, the one before that was 2018 before the pandemic. So we know there's some pandemic influence on learning losses, but civics and American history were just, released, in civics, 31% of students below basic proficiency, 48% basic and 20% at proficient. In American history, 40% below basic, 46% at basic, 13% at proficient. In both civics and American history, the the raw score numbers were down basically to the same place where, they were when they started testing around 1998. So, we all were expecting this, but we're it doesn't mean we're any less disheartened, than we are. First, tell us sort of what you think all of these numbers mean, for young people today and for civic education today.

Kerry Sautner:

And this is where that biology degree came in handy because what you do in biology, you do a lot of math. You can crunch a lot of numbers and you look for patterns. These were blatant obvious patterns. And like you said, we expect it to drop because of COVID, because of learning loss, because of certain students not being barely in any school structure whatsoever in the last three years. What it is telling us today is a couple of factors. One, we have to do better, that is absolutely like when we're talking about this, let's stop blaming kids. Stop blaming the schools and the teachers because there's a lot of different types of schools doing this great work and they're doing amazing work. We're not giving civics and history the day that it's due.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

We need to support civics in history. History has been going down for eight years now. So that's not just learning loss from COVID.

Jason Raia:

That's exactly right.

Kerry Sautner:

Yeah. And you look at those patterns, you step back and say what's going on here. You also have to look at the whole child and say, well, english and reading is down too. Guess what? How do you learn civics in history? Yes. There's an action component to it, but there's also a primary source component And when you dive into that data and you unpack it, the kids that got more exposure to high quality primary sources like the Declaration, like the Constitution, like David Walker's appeal, which is my top, like, all-time favorite, speech, they did better. So we need to make sure. So what's that telling us? We need to support our students in our classrooms. We need to support our school systems, our educators, giving them high quality, robust materials, and the teacher training that they need around that. And I know you guys do that so well here. You know, I was like, got some groups here that do that work. But you know

what? Let's be honest, we need to support our parents too. I see so many parents coming to our public classes, and I air quote classes. I saw my grandparents coming because everybody feels like they need to get a leg up on this and understand it better. Let's support everybody in our community because education doesn't just happen, you know, in the school yards, how many of our kids are homeschooled, and those parents are doing amazing work. Let's look at the whole system. How do we help everybody? How do we ensure that our adults have great training on how to teach and materials to teach? And how do we engage our students and make sure it's interesting topics that they are engaged with and that they're making choices around because we know in reading, if you give kids ten books, and they pick the one that they really like. Mine was always the book on pizza because it was always about food. And do you know what? I was a better reader though because of it because I get to choose.

Jason Raia:

Right. And that was, uh-uh, Zora Neale Hurston had this great line about let kids read whatever they want. Don't worry about forcing them to read the classics or the important letters. Let them read what they want, and they will become lifelong readers, and they will gravitate toward good writing because that's what readers do. And so sometimes you just need to trust human nature. But the other thing we need to do is stop stealing time from social studies. you know, I I, I I've recently written a piece on the challenges of civic education. And one of the things that that really bothers me and and, you know, I'm I'm currently in in the the tail end of my my Presidency, of Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies, but the thing I hear from teachers all the time is the marginalization of social studies, particularly in elementary school. You know, if you need time for math or english, the place you're taking it is probably social studies because music and art's already gone in so many schools. and so, but it does seem like in the last couple of years, we have had this realization, and I'm sure that the NAEP scores are gonna reinforce this that we need more and better civics. And that is a good thing. My concern is rooted in this divide that we have, you and I as civic educators and and are built to talk about civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions. And, there seems to be a split between those who favor civic knowledge first and foremost, that they need to know things, and those who teach civic skills. And what I am more and more coming to believe is that it's really civic dispositions that we need this idea that that one, you know, appreciates, understands and appreciates the system of government that this you know, this representative democracy that we have been bequeathed. And interestingly enough, I'm sure I know you know Danielle Allen, a good friend to civic education. She headed up the Education for American Democracy Program. She's at Harvard. She's been one of our speakers a couple of times. She's got a phenomenal book on the Declaration of Independence. I'm hoping to have her on the podcast. But she wrote a piece in the Washington Post, her regular column, and she quotes this January survey by Morning Consult. And it says, it revealed, "that generation by generation declines in a sense of pride in America. About 3 quarters of baby boomers say they're proud to live in the United States but only 54% of gen x's, 36 percent of millennials, and 16% of gen z members." And that to me goes well beyond whether our civic education is primary, not primarily knowledge based or skills based.

Kerry Sautner:

It is like a two sided coin, and I want a multi sided coin is really what I was grappling with in my mind. You can't, you have to do both.

Jason Raia:

You have to do all of it.

Kerry Sautner:

We don't teach the Constitution without teaching civil dialogue. We have a civil dialogue toolkit. We do teacher training. We do all those pieces. We need the time in the classroom. We need the support of teachers. We need the funding to go behind it too. Like, all those pieces are connected, and it's something that must happen. But we also need to be able to engage in this conversation with the knowledge, well rounded knowledge of our past, and then engage into how to make it real. Because if you're just stuck in the knowledge side and don't have action, then you might be brilliant, but you have to put it into play. Our democracy doesn't work without energy from the people. We need to be able to give them the knowledge, the skills, the dispositions. And in all reality, the behaviors that's what we're talking about. We want behaviors of citizens.

Jason Raia:

And it goes well beyond voting. It goes, it's all of this. It's, you know, being able to engage in a conversation, being able to, you know, call your representative and make your voice heard on a particular public policy. We always say around here, we don't you know, particularly care what your position is on any policy, but that you have a position that you, you know, that you have investigated it and learned about it and talked to your neighbors about it and then made a decision for yourself that this is what I think we ought to do and then make your voice heard. But all of that is part of being a citizen. Not just knowing, you know, what happened, at the, you know, at the passing of the Civil War amendments, but, you know, understanding how they apply today and then doing something with that.

Kerry Sautner:

And we have this tendency to say this or that. And it's this end at. You know, it drives me nuts, you know, like, no. It's a dilemma for thinking people. We can hold two things together at the same time and say they're both of high value. The one good thing is there was a single research study out not too long ago. And the one thing we all agree upon, and they ask. They surveyed hundreds and hundreds of people that were politically very far apart. But the one thing we can all agree on is that our country needs more civic education. So, like, that is a lovely through line. Look for those through lines, but also remember that it really is about this system only works with viewpoint diversity with listening to each other as well as learning from each other, but at the same time, if it's not working for you, Sure. Go out and vote. But you know what? You can run for office too. Like, if your community needs support and needs you to step up, go for that as well. all those pieces matter. And when students learn how it's worked and how others have made it better, they can also see today what's working and what's not working. What needs to be shored up because it's a strong, great system and what needs to be tweaked and changed, and it takes them to make that energy. So then you just have a purpose. So if my system, my community isn't working, I can do something about it. And you know what? It's on your shoulders to do it as well.

Jason Raia:

That is exactly right. It's the individual's personal accountability. And that has been a hallmark for Freedoms Foundation in talking about civic responsibility. This idea of what does it mean to be a responsible citizen? It means somebody who takes personal accountability who says I'm going to do something about this. I'm going to help solve this problem and not just sit back and

complain that somebody else hasn't solved it solved it for me. And I think that's really, you know, that that is that one of those ideas of, you know, just civic virtue that, you know, you you we have to take responsibility for things ourselves. And I think that's what the best civic education does. I wanna close just with a quote from the Time article. That I just think, you know, sums up the good things at Freedoms Foundation and the National Constitution Center and so many other great organizations are trying to do in the realm of civic education. It says "if we fail to teach our children, the principles of our democracy, and the habits of civil dialogue necessary to sustain it we will endanger the American project. Instead of building a better future by finding common ground, they will only slide deeper in the partisanship and extremism." It just felt like that's the project right now. In the 21st century in 2023, that's the project is to find common ground, to recognize that we don't have to agree on everything, that we can disagree but we are still Americans. We are still searching for that same freedom, that idea of liberty, and that that needs to unite us. And and yet, we're just at this moment that I can't remember in my lifetime a moment that has been like this. And I have lots of thoughts on why this moment may be different. Certainly there are historic moments. I think that we look at John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. That was a very divided America. So it's one of those things that sustains me and says, we're not there yet. You know, we're okay, but we're we're but we need to we need to get to a better place.

Kerry Sautner:

And that means everyone. We have a tendency to put a lot of pressure on the shoulders of our children and the shoulders of our next generation. But when we're modeling as adults, an inability to listen to each other and an inability to respect somebody's viewpoint because it's different from ours, then that's not acting like a good American either. And so we need to be okay with it. Our idea is that our country works with lots of different ideas, and our Constitution is made for fun people with fundamentally different viewpoints. like, that matters. And so a key piece of this, and when we look at the NAEP data and we look at our classrooms is You know what? They're watching us. And it's affecting their behavior. So get it together. Adults, let's do this.

Jason Raia:

Well, and I'm more and more have been coming to the idea and it's not by no means original, but that we all are civic educators. And that maybe we're putting way too much pressure on schools to educate young citizens. They have that role. There's no question and I've always loved the guardians of democracy ideas that schools are are first line defense of democracy because they're teaching young people, but but parents need to be doing it and and, you know, all and and I think maybe and we don't have to go too far down this path, but I think this is one of the things that has changed from, you know, 40 or 50 years ago is that a lot of the other structures that supported schools in civic education, be that scouting, be that religious institutions, be that just civic clubs, elks, and the the rotary, and and what have you, that as all of those have changed or or dissolved or or or been less attended over the years that that support for civic education. I always, I was saying, you know, I I used to my first job out of college, I worked at a church, ran a CYO basketball program, you know, that sort of thing. over the gym, you know, for God and country. You know, it was it so, you know, it was, you know, we were surrounded by these things sometimes. and society has changed. And some of those things, you know, and so how do we bring back that support for civic education that is supporting moms and dads who want to raise young citizens who understand their freedom and the gift of the Constitution. How do we, you know, support teachers? How do, you know, that that's the and and part of it is we're all civic educators. And we have to see ourselves as civic educators.

Kerry Sautner:

Yeah. And that's and as, you know, we have trained professionals in the classroom doing this work. And so what when we learn from the best civic educators in the classroom is you don't always have to have the answers. You have to ask the questions to get them thinking. So it's and it's not it's the parents, but it's also the aunts and uncles. It's the cousins. You know, everybody's in this. And I agree with you. It's this thought of where's that third space? Where's that other space? Because education happens all the time. You know, everywhere. And so if you're an adult and you're, you know, talking with other adults, ask questions. Why do you think that way? Oh, that's interesting. Tell me more about that. Like, those are these great questions you can ask each other that don't shut down a conversation, but open it up. We work with Robbie George all the time. He's one of my favorite scholars.

Jason Raia:

Dr. Princeton.

Kerry Sautner:

Yeah.

Jason Raia:

We know Robbie.

Kerry Sautner:

And you're scholars or some of our Bruce Murphy love your scholars. These are great people that we all work with, but what he always talks about is, like, find a civic friend.

Jason Raia:

Yes.

Kerry Sautner:

And this might not be a friend that you go out to dinner with or, like, go to the movies with. It's somebody who stretches you.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

And so how can we do that for each other? How can we do that and have those conversations? And maybe it is at work. because you're the most diverse your viewpoints are gonna be are probably at your place of work.

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

Maybe not us because—

Jason Raia:

Right.

Kerry Sautner:

I mean, we're naturally diverse in viewpoints, but we all love civic education. That's one of the agreements, but that happens a lot. So make your civic friends at work and then share at home where you've been stretched to think differently and model that behavior. That's really about what's the when you're talking about those dispositions, the disposition that we're looking for is people that respect others viewpoints, even when they don't align.

Jason Raia:

You spoke the word before I could get their respect. It is the core of how our system of government is able to function is based on respect. And when we don't model that respect, and when we are then we risk losing it. And if we lose it, then, you know, the system can't work. It cannot work if people don't have a fundamental level of respect. Again, respect is not agreeing with. Respect is, you know, it's not challenging when we think someone, you know, needs to be challenged, but it means that we do it in a way that acknowledges that they are entitled to their viewpoint. Anyways, you said questions, which is how we always end our podcast. So I'm gonna run through a series of ten easy questions.

Kerry Sautner:

Oh, no. I'm very nervous right now.

Jason Raia:

The good thing is there are no right answers. So, excluding Washington and Lincoln, who's your favorite president?

Kerry Sautner:

I'm gonna go with Adams.

Jason Raia:

Oh, I love it. Yeah.

Kerry Sautner:

I can go with Adams. I can sit and think about this one for eight hours, but I don't wanna take too long even though you can cut the waiting.

Jason Raia:

And it's definitely, you know, depending on the day, you know, I change mine but I agree. And ever since reading that giant biography of Adams. It was just a revelation. I don't think, you know, Lin-Manuel was fair to him in the musical, but it was Hamilton's musical. So, who was the best candidate who never became president?

Kerry Sautner:

Best candidate that never became president?

Jason Raia:

Historical or or someone from your lifetime.

Kerry Sautner:

I might go with, I mean, I don't know if he was technically a candidate, but I'm gonna put Hamilton in there. But most, like, not really directly a candidate, but never became a president.

Jason Aria:

Nobody was back then.

Kerry Sautner:

Exactly. So sorry for—

Jason Raia:

He certainly should have been. He would have been a candidate had he not tangled with Burr.

Kerry Sautner:

Exactly. Yeah. So Hamilton.

Jason Raia:

I think that's fair. I think that's very fair. okay. What one thing would you want every American to learn more about?

Kerry Sautner:

One thing I want every American to learn more about is absolutely the Constitution. That's such an easy question. Thank you for that one. The Constitution.

Jason Raia:

Let's see. If you had not become a museum educator, what do you think you would have ended up doing?

Kerry Sautner:

ER doctor. Yeah. I'm really good under pressure, whenever we have a civic holiday. There's a million people there and everybody's running it in a different way, and I have no problem with blood.

Jason Raia:

I love it. I love it. What one thing about you, would most people be surprised to learn?

Kerry Sautner:

We talked about it. The marine biology degree is usually the thing that most people are always surprised to learn.

Jason Raia:

Fair enough. Here's another one. If you could meet just one historical person, who would it be?

Kerry Sautner:

One historical person? American history or a world history?

Jason Raia:

Whatever you want.

Kerry Sautner:

I'm going back to Buddha. Like that, I did a bunch of classes on the ancient stories of Buddhism, and so I'm picking Buddha.

Jason Raia:

I love it. I love it and then the last question, Bourbon or Scotch?

Kerry Sautner:

Neither? Water

Jason Raia:

Okay.

Kerry Sautner:

Sorry.

Jason Raia:

No. That's fine.

Kerry Sautner:

It is like ew, ew.

Jason Raia:

It's just that last question that speaks volumes about everyone.

Kerry Sautner:

You said rum, I would've thrown rum in there.

Jason Raia:

Ok That's fine. We'll give you rum. So thanks to our guest, Kerry Sautner, from the National Constitution Center. Thank you.

Kerry Sautner:

Thank you. This is great!

Jason Raia:

I wanna also thank our producers, Lara Kennedy and Sarah Rasmussen, and most of all, I want to thank all of our listeners. Please subscribe, follow rate, and review *George Washington Slept Here* wherever you listen to podcasts. And please tell your friends.