

Preserving Freedom of Speech, Press...and the Story of How We Got There

August 18, 2014

Washington, D.C. Aug. 18, 2014 — The Bill of Rights embodies liberties many Americans take for granted, but our Founders were not always in agreement about what those liberties should be. And now National Archives visitors can view evidence of those heated debates.

The Senate's draft of the Bill of Rights from 1789, now on display in the "Featured Document" exhibit sponsored by Toyota, reveals numerous handwritten edits that took place in determining the road map for American freedoms.

The Senate's heavily edited draft is available to the public just around the corner from the final version of the Bill of Rights from 1791, which is on permanent display in the National Archives' famous Rotunda as one of America's Charters of Freedom. Visitors can compare the Senate's revisions to the final language in the Bill of Rights, revealing the democratic process in action.

The public exhibition of this historical draft and other extraordinary documents in the National Archives Museum's "Featured Documents" exhibit is made possible in part by a \$100,000 gift to the National Archives Foundation from Toyota.

"Toyota is proud to help present these defining documents, which in many ways are the basis of our democracy," said Michael Rouse, President of the Toyota USA Foundation. "We believe this is a perfect way to give back to society and contribute in a meaningful way to the rich history of our nation where we have invested for nearly 60 years."

Toyota's gift has thus far supported the display of historical documents such as the GI Bill and President Richard Nixon's resignation letter. The Senate's draft of the Bill of Rights is one of ten such historic documents that will be on display at the National Archives over the coming months.

Throughout its display at the National Archives and after, visitors can view and learn about the Bill of Rights draft online thanks to support from Toyota: <http://www.archives.gov/museum/visit/featured-documents.html>

To see past documents presented in the "Featured Document" exhibit sponsored by Toyota, please visit: <http://www.archivesfoundation.org/featured-records/>

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