



PROCON.ORG
2015
ANNUAL REPORT

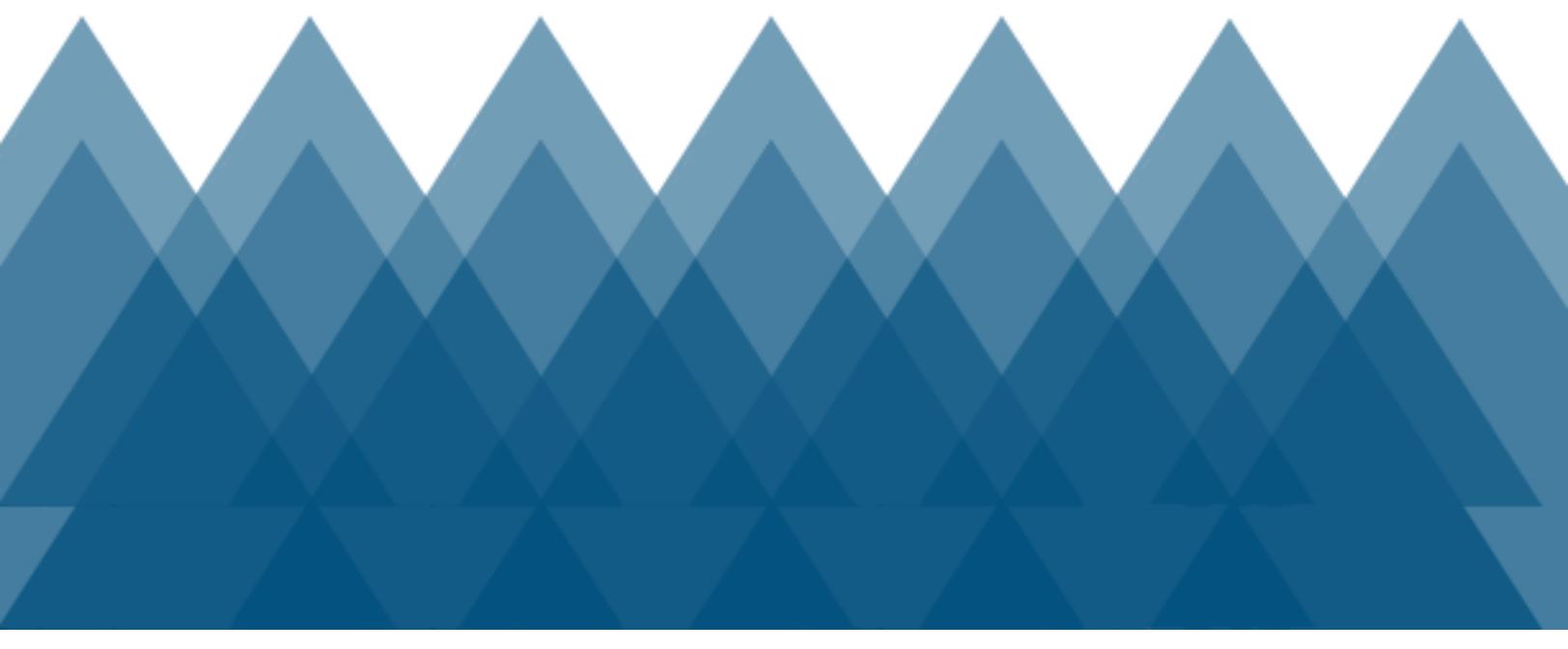


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METRICS AT A GLANCE



During Each Year	2013	2014	2015	Totals (2004-2015)
1. Expenditures (with in kind)				
Program Services	\$742,619	\$798,755	\$994,856	\$6,822,060
Management G&A	\$75,712	\$74,891	\$84,409	\$630,811
Fundraising	\$67,452	\$17,740	\$36,307	\$305,493
Total:	\$885,784	\$891,386	\$1,118,572	\$7,758,364
2. Percent Spent on Program Services				
	83.80%	89.60%	88.9%	88.0%
3. Traffic				
Users (formerly unique visitors), Compiled Monthly	16,626,661	20,314,432	23,396,504	103,712,664
Page Views	32,242,555	39,226,731	46,188,630	223,955,982
Hits	700,705,450	874,434,769	1,363,026,471	4,976,498,357
4. New Media Mentions of ProCon.org				
	344	471	510	2,061
5. New Published Books Referencing ProCon.org				
	68	101	131	502

During Each Year	2013	2014	2015	Totals (2004-2015)
6. Newly Added Schools Where Educators Use or Have Used ProCon.org				
Elementary & Middle Schools	297	476	543	2,072
High Schools	535	555	567	3,478
Colleges & Universities	179	156	158	1,476
Total:	1,011	1,187	1,268	7,026
7. New Email Subscribers				
	19,109	22,046	17,729	138,500
8. New YouTube Views				
	79,400	190,704	93,595	428,299
9. New Foreign Countries Where Educators Use ProCon.org				
	12	8	12	85
10. New US Federal & State Agencies Using ProCon.org				
	9	9	8	55
11. New Questions				
	5	33	37	1,332
12. New Sourced Statements in Response to Our Questions				
	58	306	474	13,045
13. New Biographies of People Quoted in Response to Our Questions				
	48	362	89	7,198



A summary of our cumulative web traffic from 2004 to 2015:

Traffic to ProCon.org Websites as measured in:	Users (aka Unique Visitors)	Pageviews	Hits
2015	23,396,504	46,188,630	1,363,026,471
2014	20,314,432	39,226,731	874,434,769
2013	16,626,661	32,274,934	700,705,450
2012	15,775,324	33,795,697	774,615,748
2011	9,832,598	20,749,501	524,574,855
2010	6,060,232	16,904,113	304,898,256
2009	3,826,232	13,669,681	178,496,731
2008	3,188,526	10,881,409	131,893,048
2007	2,084,004	5,521,470	47,136,448
2006	1,278,530	2,547,745	22,063,420
2005	887,870	1,748,426	41,031,751
2004	441,751	447,645	13,621,410
Totals	103,712,664	223,955,982	4,976,498,357

Source: <http://www.procon.org/traffic.php#II>.

Pageviews by Website & Year (last 5 years)

[for more traffic statistics please visit our [Traffic page](#)]

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Pageviews by Year	20,749,501	33,795,697	32,274,934	39,226,731	46,188,630
Percent Increase or Decrease over Previous Year	23%	63%	-5%	22%	18%
Site [Launch Date]					
 ProCon.org [Dec. 12, 2007]	3,507,853	5,105,572	5,496,763	6,225,252	7,663,313
 2008 Election [Dec. 12, 2007]	182,690 <i>archived 01/19/2009</i>	228,867	74,836	50,256	47,720
 2012 Election [Oct. 24, 2011]	248,629	5,331,100	493,365 <i>archived 01/22/2013</i>	351,261	365,057
 2016 Election [Nov. 3, 2015]	-	-	-	-	222,866
 Abortion [Apr. 21, 2010]	226,530	574,602	846,436	1,038,967	1,046,049
 ACLU [July 12, 2004]	288,212	303,789	251,179	244,299	324,618
 Alternative Energy [Mar. 2, 2009]	271,545	332,588	299,271	394,343	540,495

		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	Animal Testing [Oct. 22, 2013]	-	-	86,408	947,899	1,474,669
	Big Three Auto [Dec. 3, 2008]	26,133 <i>archived 05/15/2009</i>	25,733	14,932	16,729	18,705
	Born Gay [July 12, 2004]	312,450	348,667	258,175	283,566	428,463
	Cell Phones [Sep. 24, 2009]	113,005	146,884	193,231	404,464	563,556
	Churches & Taxes [Nov. 11, 2011]	5,576	51,687	72,494	93,559	124,411
	Climate Change [June 15, 2010]	56,322	122,047	133,927	202,171	337,411
	Clinton [Oct. 18, 2010]	18,699	61,841	67,529	68,171	96,614
	College Education [Sep. 30, 2013]	-	-	64,328	307,473	517,837
	College Football [Nov. 20, 2009]	80,563	103,876 <i>archived 09/18/2012</i>	82,402	90,054	98,755
	Concealed Guns [Mar. 31, 2010]	117,652	218,651	255,380	356,242	397,735

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
 Corporate Tax Rate & Jobs [Dec. 13, 2012]	-	2,697	27,886	34,516	38,804
 Cuba Embargo [Dec. 20, 2012]	-	998	115,281	151,643	219,219
 D.A.R.E. [Feb. 18, 2010]	57,979	70,396	82,500	108,390	142,205
 Death Penalty [July 31, 2008]	1,704,208	2,310,308	2,738,476	2,963,184	3,500,008
 Drinking Age [July 29, 2009]	771,514	1,071,745	1,357,435	1,665,960	1,847,107
 Drones [Dec. 19, 2013]	-	-	1,457	189,187	293,561
 Euthanasia [Jan. 8, 2007]	1,380,648	1,544,794	1,809,326	2,301,613	2,344,867
 Felon Voting [May 1, 2007]	202,554	518,273	311,372	400,508	416,759
 Gay Marriage [Sep. 16, 2010]	36,629	1,076,112	2,127,946	3,162,468	2,437,944
 Gold Standard [Dec. 31, 2012]	-	236	33,939	45,555	65,592

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
 Golf [May 24, 2012]	-	24,666	65,188	81,002	106,807
 Gun Control [June 19, 2015]	-	-	-	-	545,290
 Illegal Immigration [Nov. 26, 2007]	896,779	1,016,722	1,002,166	1,163,931	1,518,481
 Insider Trading by Congress [May 30, 2008]	77,890	100,066	40,872	26,637	35,083
 Israeli-Palestinian Conflict [July 12, 2004]	784,798	803,719	522,958	580,452	678,719
 Local Elections [Oct. 7, 2004]	-	-	-	15,225	6,574
 Medical Marijuana [July 12, 2004]	4,158,569	5,409,859	5,730,508	6,803,091	5,684,092
 Milk [Sep. 28, 2008]	406,819	496,169	453,441	502,126	686,403
 Obamacare [Sep. 2, 2010]	302,673	587,052	477,188	283,400	208,932
 Obesity [Dec. 28, 2009]	104,427	151,426	168,162	190,638	250,337

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
 Prescription Drug Ads [June 8, 2009]	54,551	54,291	56,897	130,288	188,022
 Prostitution [May 14, 2009]	1,409,034	1,679,769	1,529,576	1,438,332	1,381,245
 Reagan [Oct. 18, 2010]	29,149	68,657	67,057	80,523	146,762
 Right to Health Care [Sep. 18, 2009]	176,006	264,979	196,549	194,142	283,460
 School Uniforms [Sep. 10, 2014]	-	-	-	213,980	1,392,112
 Social Networking [Oct. 14, 2009]	495,421	702,026	874,099	941,226	1,065,101
 Social Security [Nov. 24, 2009]	92,181	89,199	64,581	69,734	78,246
 Sports & Drugs [Dec. 29, 2008]	-	564,958	620,488	649,396	902,520
 Standardized Tests [June 22, 2011]	68,608	332,923	520,187	605,757	895,214
 Tablets v. Textbooks [Nov. 20, 2012]	-	38,217	358,989	470,189	571,842

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
 Teacher Tenure [Jan. 13, 2011]	86,964	121,075	103,182	124,916	119,529
 Under God in the Pledge [July 12, 2004]	303,217	386,136	331,956	336,910	570,799
 US-Iraq War [July 12, 2004]	357,851 <i>archived 12/31</i>	287,326	166,644	160,780	256,129
 Vaccines for Kids [Jan. 18, 2010]	101,814	209,177	281,757	518,560	1,318,332
 Vegetarianism [Apr. 21, 2011]	63,990	193,050	304,206	420,901	444,643
 Video Games & Violence [Dec. 9, 2009]	348,160	527,988	899,866	1,052,598	1,196,926
 Voting Machines [May 23, 2006]	51,114	70,469	55,048	49,523	52,011
 WTC Muslim Center [Oct. 5, 2010]	34,843	32,051	22,088 <i>archived 06/03</i>	24,744	30,679

TWO NEW ISSUE WEBSITES



In 2105, we launched two new issue websites:



[Gun Control](#)

Launched: June 19, 2015

The tragic shooting event in Charleston on June 17, 2015 reignited the national debate over gun control. After several months of research, ProCon.org announces its new website exploring the pros and cons of gun control from a nonpartisan perspective.

The 53rd website from ProCon.org examines the core question "Should more gun control laws be enacted in the United States?"

Proponents of more gun control laws state that the Second Amendment was intended for militias; that deadly, senseless, and costly gun violence would be reduced; and that a majority of Americans, including gun owners, support new gun restrictions. Opponents say that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to own guns; that guns are needed for self-defense from threats ranging from local criminals to foreign invaders; and that gun ownership deters crime rather than causes more crime.



[2016 Presidential Election](#)

Launched Nov. 3, 2015

ProCon.org has researched the US presidential candidates and their views on 20 issues ranging from abortion to climate change to medical marijuana to gun control – with at least 50 more issues coming. Our new website also features a candidate matching quiz, a side-by-side candidate comparison, resources on US presidential election history, candidate finances, and a step-by-step guide on how to become president.

Republicans (Bush, Carson, Christie, Cruz, Fiorina, Graham, Huckabee, Kasich, Paul, Rubio, and Trump), Democrats (Clinton, O'Malley, and Sanders), third party candidates (after the nominating conventions for the Libertarian, Green, and Constitution parties in 2016), and independent candidates who meet the inclusion criteria appear on the website.

The ProCon.org research staff has compiled candidate stances on 20 key issues, with at least 50 more issues to follow. Positions are listed as Pro, Con, or Not Clearly Pro or Con, based on historical and other public records, direct quotes, videos, position statements and questionnaires. If a candidate has changed positions, the current and former positions are shown.

ProCon.org provides sources for each quote, candidate biographies, FEC filings, candidate finances, party history, and research projects including:

[Presidential Election Candidate Quiz](#) – Answer the same questions asked of the candidates and see a dynamic, often surprising, real-time ranking of which candidates matched your responses.

[Side-by-Side Comparisons on Key Issues](#) – Compare 2016 presidential candidate positions on the issues at a glance.

[Differences in Conservative and Liberal Brains](#) – Read 20 peer-reviewed studies concluding that liberal and conservatives are physiologically different.

The ProCon.org 2012 Presidential Election website was hailed by the *New York Times* as “the most comprehensive teaching tool for researching the candidate’s stances on issues.” (“Great Free Websites for Teaching Election,” Sep. 5, 2012). It received more than 5 million page views and had over 650,000 election quiz takers before Election Day in 2012.

Jay Rakow, CEO of ProCon.org, said: “We are thrilled to serve the public again this year with our unbiased voter information site. With candidates and PACs spending millions on political ads, and an avalanche of misleading and biased information, ProCon.org lets people separate fact from spin.”



The number of schools in which an educator has used ProCon.org grew from 5,758 schools at the end of 2014 to 7,026 schools at the end of 2015 - an increase of 1,268 schools (22%). We add schools to our list when we see that an educator (not a student) from that school has referenced ProCon.org online, usually in a lesson plan, suggested resources list, social media reference to our content, published work, or as a response to our two-minute ProCon.org teacher/librarian survey.

Those schools were from 85 different countries including (in alphabetical order): American Samoa, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Georgia, Ghana, Guam, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Yemen.

The breakdown of schools by level is as follows: 2,072 elementary and middle schools (29.5%), 3,478 high schools (49.5%), and 1,476 colleges and universities (21.0%).

EMAIL UPDATES & READER RESPONSES



We began 2015 with 120,771 email subscribers and ended the year with 138,500. We sent 17 email newsletters in 2015. Some of the more colorful and interesting emails, responses to our newsletters, and “contact us” form submissions are provided below.

PRO PROCON.ORG	CON PROCON.ORG
<p>1.</p> <p>"I am absolutely blown away by your excellent and balanced pro and con without malice or bias. This is exactly what America needs and the whole world too.</p> <p>Most newspapers today aren't worth putting on the bottom of a birdcage. I wish I could get you into every thinking person's home. TV news, radio news, and all other forms of media or Internet carry a built in bias and people flock to them so that they can hear their side of the argument and keep believing same old same old. We</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>"Here's the problem with your premise: there isn't a pro or a con to myriad issues. What's the 'pro,' for example, of raping children? What's the 'con,' for example, of arithmetic?</p> <p>I find your dichotomous approach to be part of the today's problem where there is some sort of notion that everything is up for discussion and that all opinions should be heard. Some shouldn't. I would posit that yours shouldn't...</p>

need both sides. Procon provides it beautifully."

Ray Mossholder, Reader
Dec. 11, 2015

2.

"I discovered this wonderful site and led my students to it. I asked them to spend some time touring the site before focusing on their chosen persuasive topics. I also asked them to research both sides of their issue and use the information as sources cited in their bibliographies. It made the students think deeper about their subject, compare and contract views, and critically understand their issue. It also helped to understand the issue by understanding the opposing views as well."

Jennifer Aimonetti, Language Arts Teacher
Dec. 2, 2015

3.

"I like to use ProCon.org as a springboard to argumentative essay writing. We look at certain controversial topics, students "take a stand" on one side of the room (or in the middle), and engage in conversation with those standing elsewhere to talk about their positions. This helps prepare them for

For goodness' sakes, you seem to be well-meaning: open up your eyes and your ears. Get off this notion that there are always two sides. That's nonsense..."

Bix, Reader
May 3, 2015

2.

"ProCon is not doing their job vetting sources or even reporting on the backgrounds of the 'experts' they cite [on Climate Change ProCon.org]. ProCon has managed to muddy the waters and sully its reputation with this FOX-esque 'fair and balanced' approach to this vitally important issue. SHAME!"

John Varner, Reader
Apr. 12, 2015

the frame of mind necessary in argumentative writing. ProCon opened up the discussion so they could begin to see the validity of their classmates' opposing opinions. Some were even willing to open their minds and ended up switching sides partly based upon arguments made by their peers. ProCon.org helped them to see the legitimacy of both sides of controversial topics."

Sabrina Albright, English Teacher
Dec. 2, 2015

4.

"It's helpful for some of our students to see some plausible sides to arguments rather than just assuming they are right. This provides a starting point for their thinking and from here they can evolve their skills in seeing all sides of a picture."

Samuel Kingsbury, Drama Teacher
Sep. 18, 2015

5.

"Thank you to ProCon.org, the one and only excellent forum for helping us to be aware of prevailing arguments pro-con on significantly popular issues of our days! I encourage everyone to see how good is

your organization - to savor the expansive nature of your mission to inform and help us make up our minds. I personally will continue to support your mission financially and by sharing extensively who you are and what you have been doing to serve all of us! More blessings and power to you!!

In these times of so much unreliable news and disturbing noises, how refreshing and unifying is it to see both sides of all significant issues - especially with politics and politicians muddling issues for their own selfish and divisive purposes!"

Felipe Galang, Reader
Apr. 11, 2015

6.

"I just wanted to give a huge thanks to you for the section of your site where you have all the citations already done. You are so amazing to do that and I am eternally grateful. Thank you and please keep up the good work."

Sophie, Student
Apr. 5, 2015

7.

"I found your website when a student asked a question about euthanasia while we were discussing a related topic. Your incredibly comprehensive research about it allowed all class members to think about the topic in a very concise manner. I have also researched medicinal marijuana information to share. Would love if you would post information concerning marijuana legalization/decriminalization; enforcement, impaired driving etc. My students would benefit greatly. It always comes up when drug unit is taught."

Suzanne Foster, Health Education Teacher
Jan. 28, 2015

8.

"I have the students write a fake bill that they present in front of the class. The class debates the bill and then votes (to simulate how a bill becomes a law). ProCon is the first place I send the students in order to generate ideas and spark critical thinking."

Adam Zoeller, Social Studies Teacher
Jan. 5, 2015

The logo consists of three overlapping right-pointing triangles. The leftmost triangle is dark blue, the middle one is a lighter blue, and the rightmost one is green. They are arranged in a row, overlapping from left to right.

PROCON.ORG TEACHER SURVEY

We ran a [ProCon.org Teacher Survey](#) to receive input from teachers and librarians so we could understand how they use ProCon.org and to learn their views on whether or not using ProCon.org improves their students' critical thinking skills. The survey had 2,056 respondents between Jan. 1, 2015 and Dec. 31, 2015. Some highlights from that survey include:

-  97.5% of teachers using ProCon.org reported that ProCon.org improved their students' critical thinking skills.
-  98.3% of teachers using ProCon.org reported that their students found ProCon.org useful.
-  99.3% of respondents said they would recommend ProCon.org to teachers and librarians.

It was our sixth year in a row with all indicators of success over 96%.

MEDIA & PROCON.ORG

ProCon.org received 514 media references in 2015, compared to 471 in 2014.

Notable 2015 media references included *USA Today*, *Forbes*, *New York Times*, *Edweek*, *Los Angeles Times*, Yahoo! News, The Heritage Foundation, *The Atlantic*, and *International Business Times*.

 The *OC Register* featured an interview with President and Managing Editor, Kamy Akhavan, on Jan. 4, 2015 in their article, "Watchdog: Do Tax Breaks for Churches Favor Believers over Nonbelievers?" They stated, "For some evenhanded history, we turn to Kamy Akhavan, president and managing editor of ProCon.org, which presents vigorous arguments from both sides of the debate."

 Dr. Joseph Mercola wrote, "To learn more about the legal parameters of using medical cannabis in your state, check out ProCon.org's website" in the Mar. 19, 2015 article, "A Nation Running from Pain: What Can Be Done about It," available on his website.

 Alan Thicke, star of *Unusually Thicke* and *Growing Pains*, talked about ProCon.org in a KATT Rock 100.5 FM radio interview on June 19, 2015: "ProCon.org... is designed stimulate critical thinking by providing two sides to every issue... It's ideal for teachers or students or anybody who just wants to back up their conversation with facts."

 On July 29, 2015, Peter Dunn, host of *Pete the Planner* on WIBC 93.1 FM, interviewed ProCon.org President and Managing Editor to discuss the pros and cons of lowering cooperate taxes. In his blog entry featuring the interview, Dunn wrote:

"It's a question many have asked. This is a divisive issue with people strongly vocal on either side. When it comes to these sorts of issues, I call up my buddy Kamy Akhavan of ProCon.org. I love his site, and I seriously appreciate his knowledge on both sides of these types of issues."



On Oct. 25, 2015, Larry Marino interviewed ProCon.org CEO Jay Rakow on the AM 870 show, *Sunday Morning Newsmakers*. Marino said of ProCon.org, "It is an interesting website that seems to lay out kind of like both sides of an issue. This is kind of an interesting resource for folks who, you know, don't really know a topic or want to learn more about it."



THE Journal, in a Nov. 17, 2015 article, "4 Thought-Provoking Tools for Persuasive and Argumentative Writing," wrote, "All the content [at ProCon.org] is freely available and meticulously sourced and cited, and each issue is presented in a pro/con format... With so much misleading, biased and inaccurate information in the news, ProCon.org is a welcome gold mine of objective content that promotes independence and critical thinking."



Entrepreneur, in a Dec. 29, 2015 article, "3 Ways to Interact with Others That Will Make You More Charismatic," stated, "The key is to be well-informed by reading widely on the issues that matter to you, listening objectively to different viewpoints and seeking to understand what may appeal to someone else's values in contrast to yours. Organizations such as procon.org and Munk Debates offer substantive and well-reasoned contrasting perspectives on everything from affirmative action to global warming to gun control. Check them out for context and nuance so you can become a more authentic, courageous and compelling conversationalist."



BOARD & STAFF

In 2015 ProCon.org had seven full-time staff members, two part-time employees, and eight unpaid Board members. We had also had two senior interns, two interns, and three volunteers contributing roughly 600 hours of volunteer time all together. Staff members included one Senior Researcher, one Senior Researcher/Associate Editor, one Researcher, one Associate Researcher, one IT Director, one President/Managing Editor, one School Outreach Coordinator, and one CEO, me. We also welcomed our newest new Board member, Dr. Michelle Herczog, who is the immediate Past President of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

FINANCIALS

We received charitable contributions from 616 donors in 2015 - a 159% increase from our 238 donors in 2014. For our latest financials, including charts and graphs, please visit the "[Financial Info](#)" section of our "[About Us](#)" page.



SELECT HIGHLIGHTS



Nov. 13, 2015

At the invitation of the National Council for the Social Studies, we made a presentation at their annual conference on "Using Election Issues to Teach Civic Participation." The conference was the year's largest gathering of social studies teachers in the United States.



Oct. 13, 2015

Dr. Michelle Herczog, Past President of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and Vice-Chair of the California Instructional Quality Commission, joined the ProCon.org Board of Directors.



Sep. 20, 2015

We were invited to conduct a 1-hour professional development seminar for high school teachers at the Ronald Reagan Library's Constitution Day. The seminar was titled "Using the 2016 Presidential Election to Teach Critical Thinking and Civic Engagement."



July 29, 2015

Our presentation was accepted and we gave a lecture to scholars at the 35th International Conference on Critical Thinking in Berkeley, CA, on the topic "Using

Election Issues to Teach Critical Thinking and Civic Participation."



July 27, 2015

We presented our critical thinking seminar for the 7th consecutive year at UCLA to Junior Statesmen of America (JSA) students attending the Gene Burd Symposium on Politics.



June 25, 2015

At the invitation of Mikva Challenge, we attended the "New Civics Practitioners Conference" in Chicago on June 25, 2015 and served as a panelist for two sessions called "Elections in Action – Making Elections a Dynamic Learning Experience for Youth."



Mar. 7, 2015

At the invitation of the California Council for the Social Studies, we attended their March 7, 2015 annual conference in Oakland, CA, and jointly presented, with Junior Statesmen of America, a session entitled "Don't Hate. Debate!"



Feb. 25, 2015

ProCon.org was referenced by the US Department of Labor (DOL) in its Final Rule revising the definition of "spouse" under the *Family Medical Leave Act* in light of the US Supreme Court's *United States v. Windsor* decision, which found section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act to be unconstitutional. The Rule, published in the *Federal Register* (vol. 80, no. 37), stated that the DOL found it unnecessary to include the status of gay marriage laws in the 50 states on its website because reliable data was already available from ProCon.org.

