



ProCon.org



2016 Annual Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. **Metrics at a Glance**
 - i. Expenditures
 - ii. Percent Spent on Program Services
 - iii. Traffic
 - iv. New Media Mentions of ProCon.org
 - v. New Published Books
 - vi. Newly Added Schools Where Educators Use or Have Used ProCon.org
 - vii. New Email Subscribers
 - viii. New YouTube Views
 - ix. New Foreign Countries Where Educators Use ProCon.org
 - x. New Federal & State Agencies Using ProCon.org
 - xi. Number of New Questions
 - xii. Number of New Sourced Statements in Response to Our Questions
 - xiii. New Biographies of People Quoted in Response to Our Questions
- II. **Traffic**
 - i. Cumulative Web Traffic
 - ii. Site-by-Site Traffic from 2011-2015
- III. **One New Issue Website**
 - i. Minimum Wage
- IV. **ProCon.org for Teachers**
- V. **Email Updates & Reader Responses**
- VI. **ProCon.org Teacher Survey**
- VII. **Media & ProCon.org**
- VIII. **Board & Staff**
- IX. **Financials**
- X. **Select Highlights**

METRICS AT A GLANCE



During Each Year	2014	2015	2016	Totals (2004-2016)
1. Expenditures (with in kind)				
Program Services	\$798,755	\$994,856	\$ 917,133	\$8,385,898
Management G&A	\$74,891	\$87,409	\$78,524	\$763,789
Fundraising	\$17,740	\$36,307	\$33,803	\$339,296
Total:	\$891,386	\$1,118,572	\$1,029,460	\$9,488,983
2. Percent Spent on Program Services				
	89.6%	88.9%	89.1%	88.38%
3. Traffic				
Users (formerly unique visitors), Compiled Monthly	20,314,432	23,396,504	27,873,970	131,586,634
Page Views	39,226,731	46,188,630	61,792,600	285,748,582
Hits	874,434,769	1,363,026,471	1,823,499,626	6,799,997,983
4. New Media Mentions of ProCon.org				
	471	510	618	2,679

During Each Year	2014	2015	2016	Totals (2004-2016)
5. Newly Added Schools Where Educators Use or Have Used ProCon.org				
Elementary & Middle Schools	476	543	659	2,731
High Schools	555	567	856	4,334
Colleges & Universities	156	158	296	1,772
Total:	1,187	1,268	1,811	8,837
6. New Email Subscribers				
	22,046	17,729	17,450*	74,714
			*63,786 inactive subscribers were removed	
7. New Foreign Countries Where Educators Use ProCon.org				
	8	12	5	90
8. New US Federal & State Agencies Using ProCon.org				
	9	8	4	59
9. New Questions				
	33	37	109	1,441
10. New Sourced Statements in Response to Our Questions				
	306	474	362	13,407
11. New Biographies of People Quoted in Response to Our Questions				
	362	89	26**	7,198
			**332 redundant and outdated biographies were removed	










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









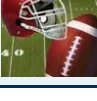

Traffic to ProCon.org Websites as measured in:	Users (aka Unique Visitors)	Pageviews	Hits
2016	27,873,970	61,792,600	1,823,499,626
2015	23,396,504	46,188,630	1,363,026,471
2014	20,314,432	39,226,731	874,434,769
2013	16,626,661	32,274,934	700,705,450
2012	15,775,324	33,795,697	774,615,748
2011	9,832,598	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	131,586,634	285,748,582	6,799,997,983




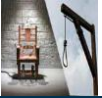






Source: <http://www.procon.org/traffic.php#II>.











Pageviews by Website & Year (last 5 years)











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










	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pageviews by Year	33,795,697	32,274,934	39,226,731	46,188,630	61,792,600
Percent Increase or Decrease over Previous Year	63%	-5%	22%	18%	19%
Site [Launch Date]					
 ProCon.org [Dec. 12, 2007]	5,105,572	5,496,763	6,225,252	7,663,313	9,298,080
 2008 Election [Dec. 12, 2007]	228,867 <small>archived 01/19/2009</small>	74,836	50,256	47,720	62,674
 2012 Election [Oct. 24, 2011]	5,331,100	493,365 <small>archived 01/22/2013</small>	351,261	365,057	357,816
 2016 Election [Nov. 3, 2015]	-	-	-	222,866	13,502,374
 Abortion [Apr. 21, 2010]	574,602	846,436	1,038,967	1,046,049	1,203,846
 ACLU [July 12, 2004]	303,789	251,179	244,299	324,618	294,733
 Alternative Energy [Mar. 2, 2009]	332,588	299,271	394,343	540,495	474,509

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Animal Testing [Oct. 22, 2013]	-	86,408	947,899	1,474,669	1,752,416
	Big Three Auto [Dec. 3, 2008]	25,733 <i>archived 05/15/2009</i>	14,932	16,729	18,705	17,596
	Born Gay [July 12, 2004]	348,667	258,175	283,566	428,463	407,203
	Cell Phones [Sep. 24, 2009]	146,884	193,231	404,464	563,556	517,287
	Churches & Taxes [Nov. 11, 2011]	51,687	72,494	93,559	124,411	129,160
	Climate Change [June 15, 2010]	122,047	133,927	202,171	337,411	466,157
	Clinton [Oct. 18, 2010]	61,841	67,529	68,171	96,614	170,019
	College Education [Sep. 30, 2013]	-	64,328	307,473	517,837	602,283
	College Football [Nov. 20, 2009]	103,876 <i>archived 09/18/2012</i>	82,402	90,054	98,755	87,126
	Concealed Guns [Mar. 31, 2010]	218,651	255,380	356,242	397,735	269,942

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
 Corporate Tax Rate & Jobs [Dec. 13, 2012]	2,697	27,886	34,516	38,804	60,975
 Cuba Embargo [Dec. 20, 2012]	998	115,281	151,643	219,219	150,271
 D.A.R.E. [Feb. 18, 2010]	70,396	82,500	108,390	142,205	142,196
 Death Penalty [July 31, 2008]	2,310,308	2,738,476	2,963,184	3,500,008	3,315,636
 Drinking Age [July 29, 2009]	1,071,745	1,357,435	1,665,960	1,847,107	1,978,358
 Drones [Dec. 19, 2013]	-	1,457	189,187	293,561	235,366
 Euthanasia [Jan. 8, 2007]	1,544,794	1,809,326	2,301,613	2,344,867	2,061,278
 Felon Voting [May 1, 2007]	518,273	311,372	400,508	416,759	712,330
 Gay Marriage [Sep. 16, 2010]	1,076,112	2,127,946	3,162,468	2,437,944	1,093,462
 Gold Standard [Dec. 31, 2012]	236	33,939	45,555	65,592	69,957

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
 Golf [May 24, 2012]	24,666	65,188	81,002	106,807	107,982
 Gun Control [June 19, 2015]	-	-	-	545,290	2,101,938
 Illegal Immigration [Nov. 26, 2007]	1,016,722	1,002,166	1,163,931	1,518,481	1,740,347
 Insider Trading by Congress [May 30, 2008]	100,066	40,872	26,637	35,083	33,276
 Israeli-Palestinian Conflict [July 12, 2004]	803,719	522,958	580,452	678,719	591,067
 Local Elections [Oct. 7, 2004]		-	15,225	6,574	6,748
 Medical Marijuana [July 12, 2004]	5,409,859	5,730,508	6,803,091	5,684,092	4,645,581
 Milk [Sep. 28, 2008]	496,169	453,441	502,126	686,403	739,004
 Minimum Wage [Mar. 31, 2016]	-	-	-	-	551,943
 Obamacare [Sep. 2, 2010]	587,052	477,188	283,400	208,932	205,164

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
 Obesity [Dec. 28, 2009]	151,426	168,162	190,638	250,337	246,791
 Prescription Drug Ads [June 8, 2009]	54,291	56,897	130,288	188,022	210,937
 Prostitution [May 14, 2009]	1,679,769	1,529,576	1,438,332	1,381,245	1,132,796
 Reagan [Oct. 18, 2010]	68,657	67,057	80,523	146,762	296,734
 Right to Health Care [Sep. 18, 2009]	264,979	196,549	194,142	283,460	368,313
 School Uniforms [Sep. 10, 2014]	-	-	213,980	1,392,112	2,014,619
 Social Networking [Oct. 14, 2009]	702,026	874,099	941,226	1,065,101	975,429
 Social Security [Nov. 24, 2009]	89,199	64,581	69,734	78,246	117,989
 Sports & Drugs [Dec. 29, 2008]	564,958	620,488	649,396	902,520	991,543
 Standardized Tests [June 22, 2011]	332,923	520,187	605,757	895,214	773,339

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
 Tablets v. Textbooks [Nov. 20, 2012]	38,217	358,989	470,189	571,842	570,942
 Teacher Tenure [Jan. 13, 2011]	121,075	103,182	124,916	119,529	103,667
 Under God in the Pledge [July 12, 2004]	386,136	331,956	336,910	570,799	527,131
 US-Iraq War [July 12, 2004]	287,326 <i>archived 12/31</i>	166,644	160,780	256,129	226,276
 Vaccines for Kids [Jan. 18, 2010]	209,177	281,757	518,560	1,318,332	1,260,947
 Vegetarianism [Apr. 21, 2011]	193,050	304,206	420,901	444,643	489,684
 Video Games & Violence [Dec. 9, 2009]	527,988	899,866	1,052,598	1,196,926	1,201,461
 Voting Machines [May 23, 2006]	70,469	55,048	49,523	52,011	108,826
 WTC Muslim Center [Oct. 5, 2010]	32,051	22,088 <i>archived 06/03</i>	24,744	30,679	19,076

ONE NEW ISSUE WEBSITE



Minimum Wage

Launched: Mar. 31, 2016

Our 55th website explores the pros and cons in the debate over increasing the minimum wage. The federal minimum wage was introduced in the 1930s by President Roosevelt and has been increased by Congress 22 times, most recently in 2009 to reach its current level of \$7.25 an hour.

Proponents say the current federal minimum wage is too low for anyone to live on; and that a higher minimum wage will help create jobs, grow the economy, and decrease wage inequality.

Opponents say that many businesses cannot afford to pay their workers more and will be forced to close, lay off workers, and reduce hiring; that an increase makes it more difficult for low-skilled workers with little or no experience to find jobs; and that low-income communities are disproportionately harmed by wage raises at the federal level.



The number of schools in which an educator has used ProCon.org grew from 7,026 schools at the end of 2015 to 8,837 schools at the end of 2015 - an increase of 1,811 schools (26%). 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, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guam, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, 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: 2,731 elementary and middle schools (30.9%), 4,334 high schools (49.0%), and 1,772 colleges and universities (20.1%).

EMAIL UPDATES & READER RESPONSES



We began 2016 with 138,500 email subscribers and ended the year with 74,714. 63,786 inactive subscribers were removed from our lists. We sent 25 email newsletters in 2016. 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>"True learning and thinking must have multiple articulations of facts and the presentation of issues. Not that there is not a truth, however, that there are multiple insistence of what truth shall be. This is an incredible time for fake news and lies, however PROCON facilitates the presentation of reality for students and the ability for students to think for themselves and weigh the competing facts to their values."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Janet Dec. 30, 2016</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>"Horrible user experience on their website. If this is the MOST important thing about the non-profit, why does the website look 10 years old?"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Matthew McKenna May 23, 2016</p>

2.

"I have been looking for an objective discussion on climate change and you guys nailed it. Sadly, I suspect that I will lose many hours in the near future poring over many of the other interesting topics you cover."

Mark

Dec. 2, 2015

3.

"You guys are awesome. I am a PhD student at Dartmouth doing cannabis legalization research. It is really really hard to find sources of objective unbiased information about cannabis legalization. I use this website as a resource all the time so I felt the need to donate. Keep up the awesome work."

Jacob

Dec. 12, 2016

4.

"I donated because I feel this type of information structure is very important. Being independent of the money that owns most business and information outlets is becoming more of a rarity. I appreciate having a trustworthy place to get the most update and accurate

information available. I wish I could help give more. Thank you."

Thera, Donor
Dec. 12, 2016

5.

"Your website has been absolutely invaluable for my students, whether they are doing heavy research on a topic or trying to find a quick synopsis of an issue. Thank you for taking the time to research and present both sides of these important issues so that our citizens can be properly informed."

Jason Goslin, Political Science Teacher
Oct. 18, 2016

6.

"ProCon.org helped my students have a discussion about key issues facing our nation and what impact those issues have on them even as teenagers."

Laura Teachout, Social Studies Teacher
Oct. 12, 2016

7.

"Try ProCon.org yourself for relevant, timely, and broadly-based information as

your "raw material" in being aware of what are really going on, in imagining real causes and effects, in being conscientious processors and purveyors of what could be most true and useful to solve problems and make choices. Yes, we all desire to be sober and deliberate sources of beneficial information! I have found and used it for years!"

Felipe, Donor

July 1, 2016

8.

"I just wanted to say that your site is outstanding. Your [2016 election] quiz should be required BEFORE anyone is allowed to touch a voting machine. I learned several things from taking the quiz and having to google for clarification before being able to answer some of the questions. It is frightening to me how little a whole bunch of people know that are getting ready to decide the next Prez. A devout Republican friend took the quiz and was so far into Democratic territory I thought we were going to have to call an ambulance. Keep up the great work."




Todd

Mar. 26, 2016

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 856 respondents between Jan. 1, 2016 and Dec. 31, 2016. Some highlights from that survey include:


-  98.7% of teachers using ProCon.org reported that ProCon.org improved their students' critical thinking skills.
-  99.8% of teachers using ProCon.org reported that their students found ProCon.org useful.
-  100% of respondents said they would recommend ProCon.org to teachers or librarians


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


MEDIA & PROCON.ORG


ProCon.org received 618 media references in 2016, compared to 514 in 2015.

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

 On Nov. 17, 2016, *Reno News and Review* wrote: "To help citizens keep track of the new president's record, ProCon.org is a 501c3 nonprofit educational site. Its CEO, Kamy Akhavan, said, 'We have spent the last year finding Donald Trump's statements on 75 policy issues from death penalty (pro) and same-sex marriage (con) to fracking (pro) and oil company subsidies (con) to medical marijuana (pro) and closing Guantanamo (con). Our staff of professional researchers have scoured articles, speeches, interviews, transcripts, you name it.'"


 *The Inquisitr* wrote on Nov. 5, 2016: "If any American voter is still feeling confused and conflicted, know you are definitely not alone in feeling this way, and check out an online site which might help in making the big decision before Tuesday, November 8: ProCon 2016 election website. They have designed a quiz about the big four presidential candidates and the controversial issues voters are talking about this year."


 On Nov. 2, 2016, *Ziptopia* wrote: "ProCon.org offers thorough, two-sided arguments on a variety of contentious topics. Looking through 'Issues We Cover' will provide you with pros and cons, so you'll be well-versed next time someone brings up something like the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The site is encyclopedic in its coverage and is a great place to research for the 2016 presidential election."

 On Oct. 19, 2016, *Houma Today* wrote: "Rather than relying on the word and arguments of those who have already made up their minds, you might find it more useful to seek out objective discussions about the two candidates and their stated positions."

This can be done in a number of places, but one website that offers a clear and easy-to-follow chart is 2016election.procon.org. The website's policy position chart includes the stated stances of Clinton and Trump, as well as those of third-party candidates Gary Johnson, a Libertarian, and Jill Stein, from the Green Party.

The chart includes links to each candidate's statements on each issue. If you have not yet made up your mind, or if you want more information about your own candidate, the chart is a good place to start."

 *The Daily News Journal* (part of the *USA Today* network), on Mar. 20, 2016, stated: "Today, with presidential campaigns in full bloom, we want to talk about the political environment, its impact on our domestic world and the family life of our teens... Your conversation might benefit from several resources: ProCon is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that relates all sides of more than 50 issues."

 The Mar. 2016 issue of *Social Education* included praise from C. Frederick Risinger: "This is an absolutely 'must have' site in every teacher's bookmark/favorites list... It has a great 'Teacher's Corner,' with free lesson plans, a section on how teachers can meet Common Core and NCSS standards as they use the Pro-Con materials, and a section on teaching controversial issues and critical thinking... I bragged about this site in my last column, but it is so perfect for this topic."



BOARD & STAFF

In 2016 ProCon.org had six full time staff members, three part-time employees, and nine unpaid Board members. We had also had two interns and three volunteers contributing roughly 200 hours of volunteer time all together. Staff members included one Senior Researcher/Associate Editor, one Senior Researcher, one Researcher, one Associate Researcher, one School Outreach Coordinator, one IT Director, one Director of Development, one President/Managing Editor (who became our incoming CEO), and one outgoing CEO (who remains a Board member).

FINANCIALS

We received charitable contributions from 578 donors in 2016, including 122 repeat donors. For our latest financials, including charts and graphs, please visit the ["Financials"](#) section of our ["About Us"](#) page.




SELECT HIGHLIGHTS



Nov. 2016

Thanks primarily to our 2016 election website, ProCon.org received 3.9 million visitors in November--an all-time record.



Oct. 11, 2016

ProCon.org and the historic Santa Monica Pier partnered to launch [PRO/CON @ The Pier – The Return of Civil Discourse](#) - a nonpartisan discussion series with prominent policy experts and celebrity moderators designed to better inform public discourse on ballot measures and current issues before Election Day. This 4-week series attracted hundreds of attendees and thousands who viewed the debates online.



Sep. 29, 2016

[Kamy Akhavan](#) became the new CEO of ProCon.org.



Sep. 22, 2016

ProCon.org jointly presented an expert panel discussion on immigration and college affordability titled "[Issues Facing Millennials: Listen, Talk, and #JustVote.](#)" It took place on Sep. 22, 2016 at the University of Southern California (USC), and was coordinated in conjunction with our partners: the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of

Politics at USC, Participant Media, TakePart, USC College Democrats, USC College Republicans, and *USA Today* College.



Aug. 16, 2016

We made a [new resource for Advanced Placement teachers](#) that ties our content to their coursework by subject. We created this resource at the request of the Talented and Gifted (TAG) magnet school in Dallas, which has been the #1 ranked high school in American for several years according to US News & World Report. The AP materials were presented in person and online to the TAG teachers and to several teachers from the #4 ranked high school in America (Science and Engineering Magnet, also in Dallas). The program was funded by an anonymous Texas donor.



July 14, 2016

On July 14, 2016, [ProCon.org held its first ever VIP salon](#) at the home of Ms. Janet Baszile in Palos Verdes Estates, CA. It was wonderful to connect with so many past, present, and future ProCon.org supporters. We thank Ms. Baszile and the many salon attendees, particularly for their inspired words about our organization's important work. We are grateful that these salon connections will lead to ongoing discussions and actions that forward ProCon.org and help spread our desperately needed public services to millions more people.



May 16, 2016

ProCon.org was declared a Top-Rated Nonprofit by Great Nonprofits for the 6th year in a row.

 **May 9, 2016**

ProCon.org conducted a 10-week adult learning course about controversial issues using our pro and con research. The class of 18 seniors met weekly to discuss issues in a structured format. The participants loved the class and the PLATO organization expressed interest in holding the class again.

 **Apr. 5, 2016**

Guidestar awarded ProCon.org its highest level of recognition, Platinum, for our "commitment to transparency." Guidestar is the nation's largest charity evaluation organization.

 **Apr. 2016**

The California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (an organization for which we serve on the Steering Committee), made ProCon.org a member of the Advisory Committee to the Los Angeles County Civic Learning Partnership, along with the other partner organizations of the Youth Civic Engagement Collaborative. The Advisory Committee is one of a network of six pilot civic learning partnerships under the auspices of the Power of Democracy Steering Committee, established by California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye.

