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# Faith & Liberty

DISCOVERY CENTER

*One of America's most immersive and interactive experiences coming to Independence Mall, showcasing the Bible's role in America's ideals of liberty and justice*

**PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 11, 2017** —A \$60 million attraction with unprecedented technology will open on Independence Mall in fall 2018, highlighting how from past to present, the Bible has changed those who changed America, American Bible Society announced Wednesday.

The [Faith & Liberty Discovery Center](#) is expected to draw 250,000 visitors annually, accelerating strong growth for America's most historic square mile. The immersive experience of the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is being led by the award-winning firm [Local Projects](#), which recently spearheaded the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and ranks as one of the most innovative in the nation. Architectural design is being led by the Philadelphia principals of [JacobsWyper Architects' SaylorGregg Studio](#). Once opened, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is projected to add over \$10 million annually to Philadelphia's economy.

"In the city where William Penn chartered religious freedom, I am excited that the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will help tell an overlooked story of our history," said Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney. "This will be a tremendous addition to Philadelphia, and an amazing experience for all our visitors."

"We are thrilled to open this exciting new experience for Philadelphia and our nation," American Bible Society President and CEO Roy Peterson said. "What the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center should be, at its finest, is a place that unites -- celebrating a diversity of faiths, backgrounds and points of view. And ultimately, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will spark a curiosity: How did the Bible influence the people who shaped our nation? And what difference can this book make in our lives today?"

The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will explore how core passages from the Bible on justice, liberty, mercy, and love have guided and inspired not only the authors of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, but generations of Americans who have wrestled with Abolitionism, Women's Right to Vote, Civil Rights, Hurricane Katrina and 9/11. In war and in peace, from one generation to another, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will bring to life the stories of people across a full faith spectrum who

have turned to the Bible for wisdom in times of conflict, for motivation to create change, and for comfort in moments of crisis.

“This experience will use groundbreaking technologies to allow visitors to not just witness history, but participate in it. It will be like nothing anyone has seen before,” said [Jake Barton](#), principal of the award-winning firm, [Local Projects](#). With the 9/11 Memorial & Museum to its credit, as well as two of the 20 most influential exhibit designs this century – Gallery One at the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum – Local Projects is breaking unprecedented ground with new technology that will connect visitors to the institution and beyond.

Even as details continue to be finalized, in a survey of 1,000 Americans, 59 percent said the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center would actually motivate them to come to Philadelphia, according to America’s Research Group, a consumer behavior research and strategic consulting firm.

Econsult Solutions, Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm, found that the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center’s construction will create 540 temporary jobs and drive \$110 million in economic impact. Once open, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will employ about 60 people, is expected to generate \$267,000 in state taxes annually and will have an economic impact of \$10.5 million each year.

As the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center comes to life, a diverse committee of top historians, religious experts and legal scholars from across the nation is helping shape the narrative experience while ensuring full historical accuracy.

“There’s a fascinating intersection of religion, politics, and law in the founding of America,” said American University professor [Daniel Dreisbach](#), whose scholarship on constitutional law and history, First Amendment law, and church-state relations has been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court.

“The Bible is woven into the fabric of the American experience. You have to know something about the Bible to understand America,” said Dreisbach, author of the new book [Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers](#). “From early colonies that were founded as Bible commonwealths to our nation’s first laws, the Bible provided basic building blocks of American civic life.”

American Bible Society CEO Roy Peterson said, “As we learn to celebrate a growing diversity of religious experiences, we realize that America had three anchoring documents– the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bible. The new exhibits will raise plenty of thought-provoking questions, but the answers will ultimately be up to each visitor to discover for themselves.”

### **About the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center**

An initiative of American Bible Society, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center explores the relationship between faith and liberty in America from its founding through today, illuminating the influence of the Bible on individuals in key historical and personal moments. Among America’s essential founding documents, the Bible is a significant organizing cultural force that has inspired, influenced, and informed American ideals of liberty that continue to shape our national identity as a free people. Learn more at [FAITHANDLIBERTYCENTER.COM](#).

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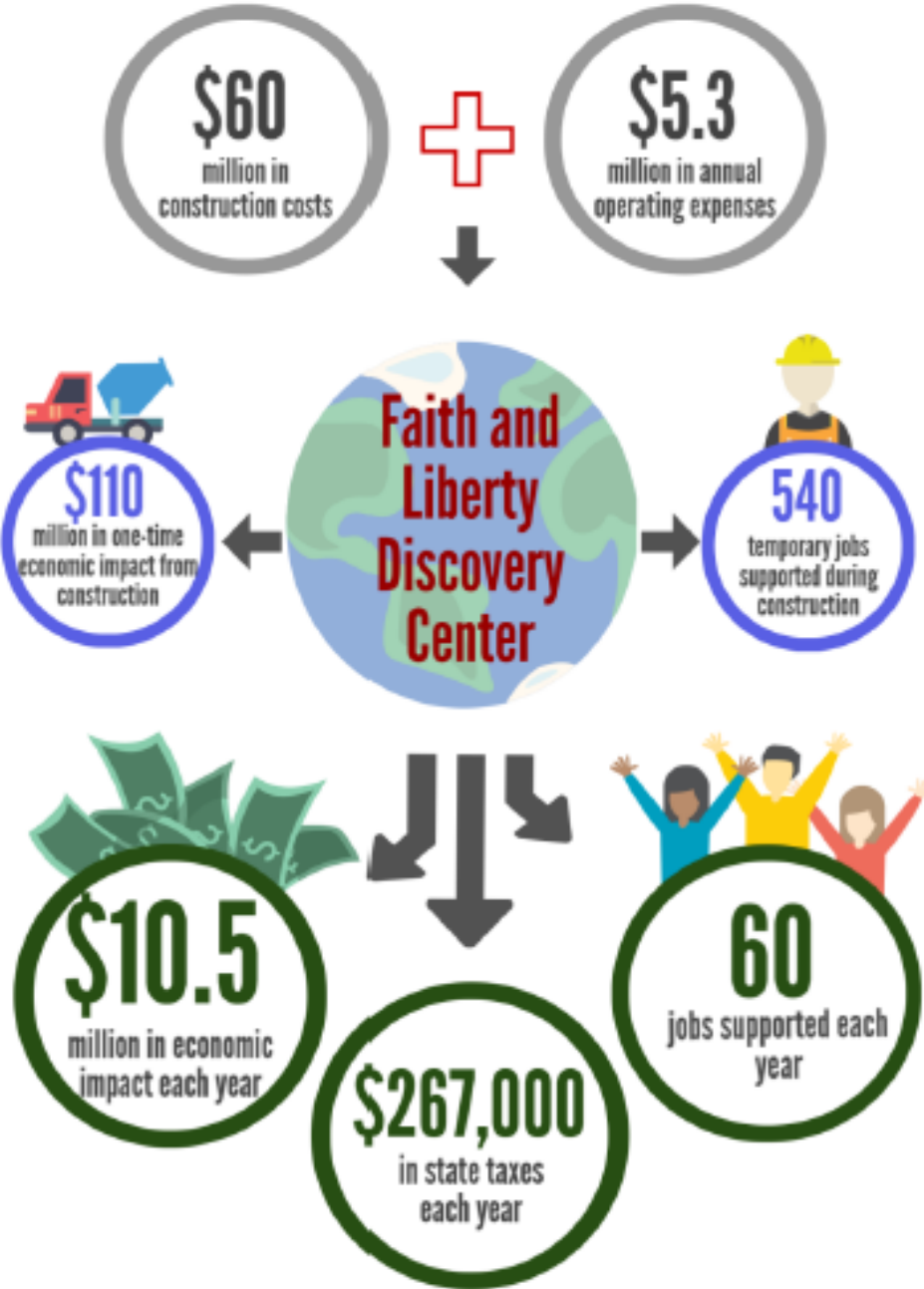
## Faith & Liberty Discovery Center: Economic Impact

City leaders and tourism officials are excited about the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center. They say the \$60 million project will help bridge Independence Mall with Old City and spur more hotel stays because it will appeal to families, history buffs, religious groups and all other tourists who want to extend their trips to Philadelphia.

Here are some details of the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center's economic impact:

- 59 percent – People surveyed who said the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center would actually motivate them to come to Philadelphia, according to America's Research Group, a consumer behavior research and strategic consulting firm
- 250,000 – Annual projected attendance, according to a report by Econsult Solutions, Inc., a Philadelphia-based economic consulting firm

# Faith & Liberty Discovery Center: Economic Impact



Source: American Bible Society (2016), Econsult Solutions (2016), IMPLAN (2013), Fiktochart (2016)

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## Faith & Liberty Discovery Center: What Others are Saying

“What the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center should be, at its finest, is a place that unites. A place where we can buffer ourselves against all of the harsh devices and systems and platforms and politics and social media that separates us.”

--Jake Barton, principal of the award-winning firm, Local Projects, which designed the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and is now planning the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center

“We don’t have to shy away from discussing the biblical influences on the Founding Fathers, because they are essential to understanding our constitutional history. Starting with Thomas Jefferson, all the framers believed people were born with certain inherent rights that came from God or nature rather than Government.”

--Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center

“They are working hard to tell a full story of not only the George Washingtons and Patrick Henrys, but also the voices of Euro-American women, African-Americans and Native Americans.”

--Marsha Brown Woodard, director of supervised ministries at Palmer Theological Seminary, who has worked with the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center’s scholarly team

“There’s a fascinating intersection of religion, politics, and law in the founding of America. The Bible is woven into the fabric of the American experience. You have to know something about the Bible to understand America. From early colonies that were founded as Bible commonwealths to our nation’s first laws, the Bible provided the basic building blocks of American civic life.”

-- Daniel Dreisbach, American University professor whose scholarship has been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court. He wrote the new book [“Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers”](#), and he’s part of the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center’s scholarly team

“Once the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center opens, I think it is really going to attract not just visitors, but residents. Regardless of your faith and whether you believe in God, this gives us an opportunity to learn

from what people had in the past and what we might have in the future. It adds to the history and the culture and the diversity of our city.”

-- Mark Squilla, Philadelphia City Councilman

“The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is our next-door neighbor on Independence Mall. I warmly welcome this new attraction to enrich the City’s interfaith dialogue and knowledge of American religious history. I believe that its presence on the Mall will significantly contribute to the understanding of the role faith has played in American history, values, and culture.”

--Ivy L. Barsky, CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of the National Museum of American Jewish History, located next to the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center

“This will be wonderful. It will be non-judgmental, and an enriching way to explore what is religion and what the Bible is.”

--Albert Gabbai, rabbi of Congregation Mikveh Israel, neighboring the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center, known as the "*Synagogue of the American Revolution*" and the oldest continuous synagogue in the United States

“I’m delighted with the perpetual development of the cradle of history. This is something so old and so ancient, but so cutting edge and so fresh.”

--Charles (Chaz) Howard, chaplain, University of Pennsylvania and a member of the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center’s scholarly team

“While the American Bible Society has a religious element to it, it’s really about the discovery of a book that is so profoundly broad. You don’t have to take it at a religious level, take it at a philosophical level.”

--Siobhan A. Reardon, president and director of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

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## The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center – At a Glance

### **About**

The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is a \$60 million attraction with unprecedented technology that will open on Philadelphia's Independence Mall in fall 2018. At its core, it will highlight how the Bible is a significant organizing cultural force that has inspired, influenced, and informed American ideals of liberty that continue to shape our national identity as a free people.

The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is expected to draw 250,000 visitors annually, accelerating strong growth for America's most historic square mile. The narrative experience of the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is being led by the award-winning firm [Local Projects](#), which recently spearheaded the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and ranks as one of the most innovative in the nation. Architectural design is being led by the Philadelphia principals of [JacobsWyper Architects' SaylorGregg Studio](#). Once opened, the Faith & Liberty Discovery Center is projected to add over \$10 million annually in economic impact to Philadelphia's economy.

### **Mission**

The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center explores the relationship between faith and liberty in America from its founding through today, illuminating the influence of the Bible on individuals in key historical and personal moments.

### **Vision**

We expect a renewal of public spiritedness that affirms and embraces ideals of civility, gratitude, kindness, generosity, and selfless service by a people who are motivated to heroic action in their local communities and for the common good.

### **An American Bible Society Initiative**

At the dawn of its third century, American Bible Society is fully committed to encouraging more people to engage the Bible so they may experience its life-changing message. The Faith & Liberty Discovery Center will welcome people of all faiths and none, and it will be a place of illumination and inspiration.