

*A New Look at the Bill of Rights: Stretching the Constitution by Exercising Democracy.* A healthy democracy is nurtured both by those who agree with the policies of the people in power, and those who dissent. As Thomas Jefferson said, "A little rebellion now and then is a good thing." Indeed, United States history is a history of conflict, and many of the rights and conditions that we take for granted today are the result of hard-fought battles of generations past.

In script and song, Rebel Voices look at some of the historical struggles that have put our Constitution to the test, for rights such as freedom of speech, women's right to vote, the right to organize a union, the abolition of slavery. We explore how the Bill of Rights has played out throughout the last century: how the interpretation of the amendments changes based on the political climate of the day; how the struggle for rights and freedoms is required of every generation; and how in this new century, we are re-living many of the challenges that our forefathers weathered in the course of maintaining our hard won liberties.

This program can be adapted for 45-minute, one-hour, or two-hour settings. With enough advance notice, we are willing to tailor our program to a particular class focus. For instance, we have "modules" on labor issues, environmental issues, and constitutions of other nations that could be inserted into the basic program. If time permits, we can also look at some of the contemporary issues that our society is struggling with today, such as inclusion of persons with disabilities, affirmative action, gay rights, and immigrants' rights.

We provide a resource list for songs included in the program, as well as a bibliography of books and web-sites used in preparing the script for this show. We also have some questions for class discussion about issues brought up in the program.

## *The Bill of Rights*