

# A Constitution for Kids

Sometimes reading the U.S. Constitution can be confusing. Most people can't tell their *habeas corpus*<sup>1</sup> from their *ex post facto*<sup>2</sup>.

In 2003, Cathy Travis took the confusion out of the Constitution. Travis, who works as a congressional aide in Washington, D.C., has just written a book [2003], *Constitution Translated for Kids*, that makes reading the Constitution as simple as saying "We the People."

The 85-page book has the original text of the Constitution on one page and Travis's **translation**<sup>3</sup> on the facing page.

For example, article 1, section 9, clause 3, of the Constitution reads: "No Bill of Attainder or *ex post facto* law shall be passed."

Travis's translation: "Criminal laws passed by Congress can be applied only from the time they are passed."

Travis said she got the idea to write the book when Ross Perot ran for president in 1992 against George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. She became angry every time Perot made statements about the Constitution that she considered inaccurate.

Travis said she took great care to make sure that her translation of the document was fair and accurate. Many aspects of the Constitution are open to debate.

"The Constitution belongs to everyone. If you make it sound like the beliefs of one party or the other, you are doing a great disservice to everybody," Travis told the *Austin-American Statesman*.

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<sup>1</sup> **habeas corpus**: a legal order to find out if a person has been wrongly sent to prison

<sup>2</sup> **ex post facto**: after the fact; retroactive

<sup>3</sup> **translation**: expressing text in a different language (in this case more easily understandable English)