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CONTACTS: Ashley Berke  
Public Relations Manager  
215.409.6693  
[aberke@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:aberke@constitutioncenter.org)

Gina Romanelli  
Education PR Coordinator  
215.409.6696  
[gromanelli@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:gromanelli@constitutioncenter.org)

**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER LAUNCHES YEAR LONG  
*ELECTION '08: THE POWER OF WE* SERIES**

Philadelphia, PA (March 31, 2008) –The National Constitution Center in Historic Philadelphia is celebrating the 2008 election season with an exciting, year long series, ***Election '08: The Power of We***, which is designed to promote voting during the presidential election and active citizenship every day. *Election '08: The Power of We* includes a variety of on-site public programs, community and national outreach, education initiatives, and a new exhibition, *Headed to the White House*. CBS 3 and The CW Philly 57 are the official media partners for *Election '08: The Power of We*.

“Presidential elections are a time for all Americans to come together and make a collective decision about our country’s direction,” says Joseph M. Torsella, President and CEO of the National Constitution Center. “The National Constitution Center is the ideal place to celebrate democracy, learn how to participate in one of the most important acts of citizenship, and select the elected official who represents all Americans.”

***Headed to the White House* Exhibition**

Visitors can follow the path to the presidency with the *Headed to the White House* exhibition, developed by the National Constitution Center to engage students and families with the excitement, pageantry, and importance of presidential elections. The exhibit will open at the National Constitution Center on Constitution Day, September 17, 2008, and will run through January 20, 2009, to coincide with the election and inauguration of a new American president.

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## ADD ONE/ELECTION 2008 PROGRAMMING

The exhibit will offer visitors role-playing opportunities and will use multimedia, interactive, and theatrical experiences to convey the importance and excitement of America's greatest democratic rite. Visitors will learn about the electoral process, the issues and candidates in the 2008 race, and some of the fascinating history of presidential elections.

After its run at the National Constitution Center, *Headed to the White House* is expected to travel around the country. The exhibit will also include an integrated package of curriculum material and a companion website.

### **On-Site Programming**

As soon as they step through the door, the Center's Grand Hall Lobby will be "election central" for visitors. Every visitor to the Center, even those under the age of 18, will have the chance to cast their vote for president. The Lobby will feature a running tally so that visitors can see the most up-to-date results. There will also be a countdown clock to Election Day.

Guests ages 18 and over can register to vote on-site, as well. Registration forms are available in the Lobby for residents from every state, and Constitution Center staff members are on-hand to assist with the registration process.

Visitors can also view a special display of voting booths from America's past and learn about different voting methods, the expansion of voting rights, and the importance of voting for all citizens. They will also be able to weigh in on current campaign issues by responding to questions posted on special election "talk back" panels in the Grand Hall Lobby.

During the *Elections from Start to Finish* presentation, offered daily in the Lobby by museum educators, visitors have the chance to learn about in the election process from the primaries to the inauguration. Guests can participate in 5-10 minute demonstrations that include the latest campaign developments, debates, and speeches.

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## ADD TWO/ELECTION 2008 PROGRAMMING

In addition, the Center is continuing to offer the *Destination: White House* class trip package for student groups to teach them about past presidents, historic elections, and presidential powers throughout history. Students will learn about platforms, watch some of the most famous campaign ads of all time, and elect one of their classmates to serve as president.

Three new election-related Town Hall Walls have also been added to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, as a way for visitors to voice their opinions on various topics, including the Electoral College, the requirement of a picture ID to vote, and mandatory voting.

### **Community Outreach**

The National Constitution Center is getting students involved in the excitement of the presidential election through a fast-paced, hands-on civic learning program brought directly to their schools. The *Youth Voter Registration Initiative* engages students with the nuts and bolts of the presidential election process in an interactive, fun-filled format. Students learn about political parties, candidates, and elections by developing platforms, creating campaign commercials, and voting in a mock election.

A special feature of the *Youth Voter Registration Initiative* allows for eligible high school students to register to vote during the school assemblies where the program is presented. Students watch a special message from Mayor Michael Nutter, encouraging them to get involved in the election and urging 18 year olds to register and vote in the upcoming presidential election. Through this initiative, the National Constitution Center is challenging Philadelphia to double the number of registered 18 year old voters in the city.

The *Youth Voter Registration Initiative* is presented by the National Constitution Center, Student Voices, the Committee of Seventy, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizens for Children and Youth, Philadelphia Home and School Council, and a coalition of community groups working together to encourage students to

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get informed, stay involved, and, if they are eligible, register and vote. The program is available free of charge to each of Philadelphia's 58 public high schools.

The Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy (PennCORD), of which the Center is one of four lead partners and serves as the managing partner, will also work with the Center on engaging students across the state in the election and encouraging 18 year olds to vote throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### **National Outreach**

The National Constitution Center, in partnership with a consortium of national nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations dedicated to empowering and encouraging eligible voters in America to engage in the 2008 presidential election, will present a series of innovative programs from the citizen perspective designed to stimulate conversation about the election process and the issues being debated in this campaign season. The series of programs starts with the premise that ordinary citizens have a voice, not only in choosing among candidates, but also in shaping the nature of the election from its most elemental stages. To further extend the reach of this conversation, the Constitution Center is partnering with Declare Yourself, Mobilize.org, Why Tuesday, and 18 in '08.

Throughout the year, the Center will raise three questions about the election process and invite citizens to contribute their words and ideas via email at [talkback@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:talkback@constitutioncenter.org). These conversations will culminate in three town hall style programs at the Center:

### ***What's your PRIMARY concern?***

On April 2, 2008, just twenty days before Pennsylvanians go to the polls in the state primary – and when many other states have already voted – this program goes to the heart of the primary process. Is it fair? Should it be changed? If so, how? The Center will present a panel of political experts from this year's Republican and Democratic campaigns who will respond to citizens' ideas for reform.

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## ADD FOUR/ELECTION 2008 PROGRAMMING

### ***What's your voting story?***

The Center has partnered with Declare Yourself and publisher HarperCollins to help launch a new compilation of first-time and memorable voting stories from prominent Americans called *Declare Yourself: Speak. Connect. Act. Vote. More Than 50 Celebrated Americans Tell You Why*. The conversation will take place on May 27, 2008 and will ask citizens to describe a memorable time in the voting booth and what it meant to them, as a means of inspiring others to engage in the process.

### ***How would you Address America?***

Once a president is chosen, what do citizens want most to hear from him or her? *Address America* is an opportunity for the public to submit via the web their own ideas about what they want to hear on Inauguration Day 2009. Selected submissions will be incorporated into a special *Address America* exhibition mounted in the Center's Posterity Hall. These submissions will also be used to help inform a conversation held at the Center on December 8, 2008, where the public will hear some of the great addresses of the past and be invited to offer their own. A panel of speechwriters and historians will be on hand to add their own insight as to how Presidents can shape the national dialogue.

### ***Presidential Platforms Considered***

In addition, the Center will host three prominent national and international figures in the fall to respond to citizens' concerns around the issues at the forefront of the 2008 election, such as the economy, foreign policy, and health care. These highly visible events will consider the policy platforms of the two nominees for president just prior to the election, and help voters better understand the differences between the candidates' plans and how they might impact America.

### ***18 in '08***

College filmmaker David Burstein will visit the Center on April 19, 2008, for a screening and discussion of his film, *18 in '08*, a nonpartisan documentary about what is at stake for youth in the 2008 election and how decisions made in Washington, D.C. today will affect young people for years to come. The film is ultimately a call to young people to overturn traditional under-representation in election campaigns, get involved in the political process, and vote.

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## ADD FIVE/ELECTION 2008 PROGRAMMING

### **Education Initiatives**

The Center is utilizing its website, [www.constitutioncenter.org/visiting/Election2008](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/visiting/Election2008), to provide unlimited access to real-time information and updates about candidates, a countdown clock to Election Day, and a direct link to news stories from around the world. Visitors to the site can also access their state's website to identify key dates for voter registration, primary voting information, and to identify all candidates running for local, state, and federal office.

The Center is also launching *Seize the Vote!*, an online game about the history of voting rights in the United States. Players must answer questions about voting rights of the past and present. When a question is answered correctly, they are offered choices on how best to move their character closer to seizing the right to vote. The game will be accompanied by a lesson plan for easy use in classrooms across the country, and will be made available on the Center's website at no charge.

In addition, a series of lesson plans about the process of elections, including voter registration, will be made available on the Center's website. The lessons will be written to cover the entire election through the lens of a fictional political party, the Great New Party (GNP).

The Center's newly designed Class Visit Activity Guide for elementary, middle, and high school student groups complements the Center's overall goal to promote the teaching of civic education through active citizenship. The guide serves as a tool to educate students for citizenship through a wide variety of guided and self-guided tours that assist in a greater knowledge of and appreciation for the election, the election process, and many pivotal events in history.

With support from the Annenberg Foundation and in collaboration with Scholastic, Inc., the National Constitution Center will present Election 2008 editions of *The Exchange: A Marketplace of Student Ideas*. The first edition will take place on May 20, 2008, and a second program is slated for September 2008. Each will provide students from across

## ADD SIX/ELECTION 2008 PROGRAMMING

the country with a forum to deliberate with one another about the issues of the current presidential election. The May edition of *The Exchange* includes a roundtable discussion with students from across the country, focused on the creation of a youth agenda for the presidential candidates.

The National Constitution Center will also offer many election resources to educators and students through lesson plans, workshops, and Internet resources. Teachers from across the country will have the opportunity to participate in the Center's *Annenberg Summer Teacher Institute: Teaching the Presidential Election*. Educators will study every stop on the road to the White House, take part in lectures by leading national scholars, and develop original curriculum about the presidential election.

### **About CBS 3 and The CW Philly 57**

CBS 3 (KYW-TV) and The CW Philly 57 (WPSG-TV) are part of CBS Television Stations, a division of CBS Corporation.

### **About the National Constitution Center**

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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