



Greetings,

You can't pick up a newspaper, turn on the television, or log onto your laptop lately without being reminded that this election year is special. But in truth, every election is special if you consider what voting in America truly means and how hard "We the People" have fought to have our say.

Voting is a collective celebration of democracy. It's the way that "We the People" can make our preferences known to the leaders of our nation. In fact, voting for president is the one act of citizenship that involves more Americans at the same time than any other.

These remarkable privileges and responsibilities connect us all to 1787, when the Founding Fathers decided to begin the Constitution with the words "We the People." They didn't choose those words lightly. They picked them because they wanted to make it perfectly clear that the nation they were forming was a popular sovereignty – one where *the people* of the United States, not a crowned monarch, not a group of noblemen, would govern.

Of course precisely who "We the People" included became a question that fueled the dramatic story of voting rights in our country for more than 130 years. African Americans, 18-year-olds, and women fought long and hard for the right to vote because they knew that without access to the ballot box they could never call themselves complete American citizens.

Voting is one of the most active displays of citizenship in which Americans can participate, and casting a ballot in a presidential election is particularly important because the president is the only elected official who represents all Americans.

Therefore, it's with great admiration for the founders' insightful vision of citizen participation that the National Constitution Center presents ***Election 08: The Power of We***, a year-long slate of initiatives designed to serve as a window into the supreme importance of active citizenship throughout the presidential election process.

It's our hope that *The Power of We* will inspire all Americans to exercise that amazing right, given to us by the Constitution. An exciting presidential election like the one we are experiencing this year is one of the strongest reminders of our country's need for engaged citizens during this election year and every other. We must exercise the remarkable power given to us by the Constitution – the right for "We the People" to determine our nation's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Torsella'.

Joseph M. Torsella
President and CEO