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ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT, THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER ANNOUNCES NEW EXHIBIT, THEATER PERFORMANCE, AND PODCAST SERIES

New exhibit, opening spring 2019, will focus on the Reconstruction era

Philadelphia, PA (July 9, 2018) – Today, on the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the [14th Amendment](#), the National Constitution Center announced a series of initiatives to commemorate the Reconstruction amendment that guaranteed equal protection to all persons, highlighted by a new permanent exhibit set to open in spring 2019. Other initiatives include the development of a new theater performance shedding light on the history of Reconstruction and the ratification of the 14th Amendment, as well as a podcast series bringing to life the voices of this era’s unsung heroes.

“The 14th Amendment inscribed in the Constitution President Lincoln’s promise at Gettysburg of a new birth of freedom,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen. “On the 150th anniversary of the amendment, these initiatives will allow learners of all ages to explore how the equality promised in the Declaration of Independence was not made explicit in the Constitution until the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, ratified after the Civil War.”

Reconstruction Era Exhibit

In spring 2019, the National Constitution Center will open the first gallery in America devoted to exploring the constitutional debates and key figures — from Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass to John Bingham and Harriet Tubman — central to the formation and ratification of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. From the early American republic to the Civil War and Reconstruction, the exhibit will use personal stories, documents, and artifacts to engage visitors with themes of freedom, equality, and citizenship. The exhibit will include artifacts from collections around the region and across the country, including featured objects from the collection of the Civil War Museum of Philadelphia on loan from the Gettysburg Foundation and the Union League of Philadelphia. While learning about these Reconstruction Amendments, visitors will discover the promises that were enshrined in the Constitution and their impact on all Americans. Visitors will also explore debates over the constitutional legacy of Reconstruction, which continue in America today.

To assist in the development of this exhibit, the National Constitution Center has enlisted a bipartisan panel of America’s leading scholars to serve as an advisory board. They include:

- **Randy Barnett**, law professor at Georgetown University Law Center
- **Laura Edwards**, Peabody Family Professor of History at Duke University
- **Garrett Epps**, professor of law at the University of Baltimore
- **Eric Foner**, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University
- **Thavolia Glymph**, professor of history and African-American studies at Duke University
- **Allen Guelzo**, Henry R. Luce III Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College

- **Kurt Lash**, E. Claiborne Robins Distinguished Professor of Law at University of Richmond School of Law
- **Earl Maltz**, Distinguished Professor at Rutgers University School of Law
- **Kate Masur**, associate professor at Northwestern University
- **Darrell Miller**, Melvin G. Shimm Professor of Law at Duke University School of Law
- **Janai Nelson**, associate director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
- **Matthew Pinsker**, associate professor of history and Brian Pohanka Chair in American Civil War History at Dickinson College
- **Rick Valelly**, Claude C. Smith '14 Professor of Political Science at Swarthmore College
- **Kimberly West-Faulcon**, Professor of Law and James P. Bradley Chair in Constitutional Law at Loyola Law School

The advisory board will work with the National Constitution Center's staff to ensure that the exhibit is faithful to the best scholarship on the constitutional legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Theater Performance

In summer 2019, the National Constitution Center will launch a theater performance that sheds new light on the Reconstruction era and the ratification of the 14th Amendment. This new theater performance will be made possible through a \$300,000 [grant](#) from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage. The performance will explore significant historical documents and bring to life the leaders, influential figures, and everyday Americans directly affected by the Reconstruction Amendments.

Podcast Series

Beginning in August 2018, the National Constitution Center's podcast *We the People* will host a special series exploring the key figures of the Reconstruction era and why their stories resonate today. Hosted by President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen and inspired by a [recent podcast conversation with award-winning documentarian Ken Burns](#) on the power of telling constitutional stories, the series will feature renowned historians such as Mary Frances Berry, David Blight, and Gerard Magliocca discussing the complex histories of key figures like John Bingham, Frederick Douglass, and Callie House. *We the People* is available at constitutioncenter.org/podcasts, via iTunes, or anywhere podcasts are available.

The National Constitution Center's yearlong commemoration of the 14th Amendment is part of a multi-year initiative to commemorate the 150th anniversaries of each of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. In addition to the projects mentioned above, the Center continues to honor these historic anniversaries in several ways. In April 2018, the Thurgood Marshall Institute at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. and the National Constitution Center hosted an [America's Town Hall symposium on the 14th Amendment at 150](#) featuring three daytime panels and an evening keynote with Eric H. Holder, Jr., the 82nd attorney general of the United States.

Additionally, the Center's annual Constitution Day celebration on September 17, 2018, will focus on the 14th Amendment, and the Center has developed engaging [educational resources](#) for teaching the Reconstruction Amendments in the classroom, including [essays on the 14th Amendment](#) written by leading scholars Akhil Reed Amar, John C. Harrison, Nathan S. Chapman, Kenji Yoshino, Brian Fitzpatrick, Theodore M. Shaw, Erwin Chemerinsky, and Earl Maltz for the National Constitution Center's [Interactive Constitution](#).

About the National Constitution Center

The [National Constitution Center](https://www.constitutioncenter.org) in Philadelphia inspires citizenship as the only place where people across America and around the world can come together to learn about, debate, and celebrate the greatest vision of human freedom in history, the U.S. Constitution. A private, nonprofit organization, the Center serves as America's leading platform for constitutional education and debate, fulfilling its Congressional charter "to disseminate information about the U.S. Constitution on a nonpartisan basis." As the **Museum of We the People**, the Center brings the Constitution to life for visitors of all ages through interactive programs and exhibits. As **America's Town Hall**, the Center brings the leading conservative and liberal thought leaders together to debate the Constitution on all media platforms. As a center for **Civic Education**, the Center delivers the best educational programs and online resources that inspire, excite, and engage citizens about the U.S. Constitution. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit [constitutioncenter.org](https://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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