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CONTACT: Susan Hamilton, 609/440-6917  
[shamilton@devineandpartners.com](mailto:shamilton@devineandpartners.com)  
Molly Stieber, 215/568-2525  
[mstieber@devineandpartners.com](mailto:mstieber@devineandpartners.com)

**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER RECEIVES \$5.5 MILLION GRANT FROM  
JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION TO EXPAND CIVIC LITERACY**

**Creation of a Coalition of Freedom, With Regional and National Programs,  
Will Transform Constitutional Understanding**

Philadelphia (December 8, 2014) – The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, the Museum of We the People, America’s Town Hall, and a Headquarters for Civic Education, has received a \$5.5 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation, Constitution Center President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen announced today. The three-year grant will create a national Coalition of Freedom to increase awareness of the rights set forth in the United States Constitution and other founding documents through an online Interactive Constitution; playwriting, short-story and essay contests for students; a schedule of on-site and traveling Town Hall debates; and a contest that challenges public and independent school teachers to create plans to increase constitutional literacy in their schools. The contest includes prizes of up to \$100,000 for the winning schools and \$10,000 for the winning students.

“We are deeply grateful to the John Templeton Foundation for this generous grant,” said Rosen. “It will help the National Constitution Center achieve our mission of serving as America’s leading non-partisan resource for constitutional education and debate. I’m especially excited that we can now create the best Interactive Constitution on the web, supervised by an advisory board co-chaired by leaders of the conservative Federalist Society and liberal American Constitution Society.” Rosen, who is also a leading constitutional scholar, law professor, journalist, and author added: “In these polarized times, it’s crucial for there to be one place in America where liberals and conservatives can converge to educate themselves about our constitutional liberties. The Coalition of Freedom grant will allow the National Constitution Center to become an inspiring convening platform for civil dialogue about the Constitution.”

“We’re very excited to partner with the National Constitution Center. This work will help expand an appreciation and understanding of the immense freedoms that Americans enjoy through the U.S. Constitution, while also providing a uniquely welcoming place to respectfully debate the most important and pressing questions about the nature, extent, and potential threats to those liberties in today’s complex and changing world,” said Daniel Austin Green, Director of Individual Freedom & Free Markets at the John Templeton Foundation.

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A three-year project, the Coalition of Freedom will be overseen by an ideologically balanced scholarly Advisory Board co-chaired by Lee Otis, Senior Vice President and Faculty Division Director of the Federalist Society, and Caroline Frederickson, President of the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy. It will also include scholarly co-chairs Richard Pildes, Sudler Family Professor of Constitutional Law at New York University School of Law, and Nicholas Rosenkranz, Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center and Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute.

The project will produce the following:

### **INTERACTIVE CONSTITUTION**

The Coalition of Freedom will create the best non-partisan Interactive Constitution on the web, commissioning the leading conservative, classical liberal and liberal scholars in America to write white papers and explanatory material about all provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The scholars will write a common statement about the settled law and history relating to each constitutional provision as well as separate statements making their distinctive perspectives clear. The Interactive Constitution will be developed in partnership with the College Board, which recently announced requirements that all SAT and AP U.S. History and Government test takers study the Founding Documents.

### **PLAYWRITING AND ESSAY CONTESTS**

Students in 6th, 8th and 12th grades in the Philadelphia region and then across the nation will have the opportunity to participate in either a playwriting or essay contest. The playwriting competition will ask students to imagine what Mrs. Elizabeth Willing Powel said next when Benjamin Franklin told her the Founders had created: "A republic, madam, if you can keep it." For the essay competition, students will be asked questions such as: "What do people misunderstand or not know that is critical to protecting fundamental freedoms?" The winning playwright will have his/ her work produced and presented at the National Constitution Center.

### **DEBATES, BLOG POSTS AND PODCASTS WITH SCHOLARS**

Leading conservative, classical liberal and liberal scholars will participate in the National Constitution Center's Town Hall debates, blog posts and podcasts. In partnerships with organizations including the Federalist Society, the American Constitution Society, and Intelligence Squared U.S., the National Constitution Center will gain national reach through traveling debates throughout the United States. Americans will better understand the historic roots and current significance of their natural rights and liberties and be inspired to debate and defend them.

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Through this grant, the National Constitutional Center will also present short story and educator contests in the City of Philadelphia and throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that will promote the importance of the Founding Documents and constitutional literacy for today's young people. The contests will offer cash prizes up to \$10,000 for students and up to \$100,000 for schools. The contests will be offered three times over the grant period – Fall 2015, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017.

**SHORT-STORY WRITING CONTEST**

Eleventh grade public and independent school students in Philadelphia will be invited to develop short stories based on the theme "Liberty and Virtue." The student with the winning story will receive \$10,000 and the runner-up will receive \$5,000. Winners of the first contest will be announced in December 2015 at the National Constitution Center's 13th Annual John M. Templeton, Jr. Lecture on Economic Liberties and the Constitution. The contest will expand in 2016 and 2017 to include all Pennsylvania schools.

**FIVE-YEAR LESSON PLANS**

Educators in Philadelphia public and independent schools will be invited to develop five-year plans to improve constitutional literacy in their classrooms and earn cash prizes for their schools. The first place prize is \$100,000, second place is \$50,000, and third place is \$25,000. The contest will expand in years two and three to include teachers throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The National Constitution Center is located at 525 Arch Street on Philadelphia's Independence Mall. The Center is open 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, until 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and from Noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. General admission is \$14.50 for adults, \$13 for seniors, students with ID, and youth (ages 13-18), \$8 for children (ages 4-12), and is free for active military. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit [constitutioncenter.org](http://constitutioncenter.org). On Bill of Rights Day, December 15, 2014, the National Constitution Center will open *Constituting Liberty: From the Declaration to the Bill of Rights*, an exhibition featuring one of the 12 surviving copies of the Bill of Rights. The exhibition, which will be housed in the Center's new George H.W. Bush Gallery, will continue through 2017.

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#### About the National Constitution Center

The [National Constitution Center](#) in Philadelphia is the Museum of We the People, America's Town Hall, and a Headquarters for Civic Education. As the **Museum of We the People**, the National Constitution Center brings the United States Constitution to life for visitors of all ages and inspires active citizenship by celebrating the American constitutional tradition. The museum features interactive exhibitions, engaging theatrical performances, and original documents of freedom. As the only institution established by Congress to "disseminate information about the United States Constitution on a non-partisan basis," the National Constitution Center serves as a **Headquarters for Civic Education**—offering cutting-edge learning resources including the premier online interactive Constitution. As **America's Town Hall**, the National Constitution Center hosts timely constitutional conversations uniting distinguished leaders, scholars, authors, and journalists from across the political spectrum. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit [constitutioncenter.org](http://constitutioncenter.org).

#### About the John Templeton Foundation

The John Templeton Foundation ([www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org)<<http://www.templeton.org>>) serves as a philanthropic catalyst for discoveries relating to the Big Questions of human purpose and ultimate reality. The Foundation supports research on subjects ranging from complexity, evolution, and infinity to creativity, forgiveness, love, and free will. It encourages civil, informed dialogue among scientists, philosophers, and theologians and between such experts and the public at large, for the purposes of definitional clarity and new insights. The Foundation's vision is derived from the late Sir John Templeton's optimism about the possibility of acquiring "new spiritual information" and from his commitment to rigorous scientific research and related scholarship. The Foundation's motto, "How little we know, how eager to learn," exemplifies its support for open-minded inquiry and its hope for advancing human progress through breakthrough discoveries.

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