

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Merissa Blum, 215-409-6645
mblum@constitutioncenter.org

HAMILTON: THE CONSTITUTIONAL CLASHES THAT SHAPED A NATION,
NEW EXHIBIT TO OPEN AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER IN MARCH 2018

From newspaper wars to dueling grounds, witness the rise and fall of Alexander Hamilton

Philadelphia (February 14, 2018) – On March 23, the National Constitution Center will open a compelling new exhibit in its Annenberg Gallery highlighting the competing ideas of Alexander Hamilton and his legendary rivals. Created by the National Constitution Center, ***Hamilton: The Constitutional Clashes That Shaped a Nation*** explores Hamilton’s fraught relationships with James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Aaron Burr. Examining the personalities and constitutional debates that shaped America – including the scope of the national government, the establishment of a standing army, the creation of a federal banking system, and more – the exhibit provides an intimate look into Alexander Hamilton’s enduring role in the constitutional and political arguments that continue to create sparks to this day.

“All of American history can be viewed through the lens of the constitutional clashes between Alexander Hamilton and his founding era rivals,” said Jeffrey Rosen, President and CEO of the National Constitution Center. “We are thrilled to open this new exhibit about Hamilton and his battles of ideas with James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Aaron Burr, battles between national power and states’ rights that continue to shape who we are as a nation today.”

The exhibit narrative begins in 1789 when the national government began operating under the new U.S. Constitution. In each section, visitors are introduced to one of Hamilton’s rivals and their competing visions for the nation. This includes Hamilton’s public dispute with James Madison over the scope of national power, arguments with Thomas Jefferson that developed into the nation’s first political parties, disputes with John Adams over foreign policy, and a final clash with Aaron Burr, whom Hamilton believed was an unprincipled man. Additionally, the exhibit examines Hamilton’s personal struggles, which revolved around his keen sense of honor, and concludes with an exploration of his legacy.

In each exhibit case, rare documents and artifacts explore these competing arguments and reveal the fragility of the new nation. Artifact highlights include:

- An anonymously published essay in the *National Gazette* in which James Madison, without mentioning Hamilton by name, directs criticism at the treasury secretary (American Philosophical Society Library, 1792)
- A to-do list written by Thomas Jefferson, which captures his main divergence with Hamilton: limiting the power of the national government and bolstering that of the states (Library of Congress, 1792)
- The Reynold’s Pamphlet: Hamilton’s 95-page refutation of public corruption charges, in which he admitted to adultery (American Philosophical Society Library, 1797)

- Hamilton's portable writing desk from the late 1700s (Burke Library at Hamilton College)
- A letter published by Hamilton in 1800, in which he questions John Adams's competence to be president (The Historical Society of Pennsylvania)
- Handwritten regulations for the duel between Hamilton and Aaron Burr (New-York Historical Society, 1804)
- Exact replicas of the original Hamilton-Burr dueling pistols, ca. 1976 (JPMorgan Chase Corporate History Collection)
- A 1788 first edition copy of *The Federalist*, a work that remains one of Hamilton's greatest legacies (National Constitution Center Collection)

To continue the exhibit experience, visitors can "meet" Alexander Hamilton and James Madison in the National Constitution Center's iconic *Signers' Hall*, featuring life-size bronze statues of the Founding Fathers, and learn more about their roles in the Constitutional Convention. The Center will also offer educator workshops, special member events, and museum visitor programming in conjunction with the exhibit. Visit constitutioncenter.org/calendar for up-to-date programming information.

On Thursday, March 22 at 9 a.m., the National Constitution Center will host a press preview breakfast for media personnel. Contact Merissa Blum at 215-409-6645 or mblum@constitutioncenter.org to RSVP.

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 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

Ticket Information

Hamilton: The Constitutional Clashes That Shaped a Nation, March 23, through December 31, 2018
Included with general admission: Adults \$14.50; Youth (6-18) \$11; Students w/ID and Seniors \$13.
Members, active military personnel, and children ages 5 and under are free.

About the National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center 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.

###