

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Annie Stone, 703-217-1169  
[astone@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:astone@constitutioncenter.org)

Merissa Blum, 215-370-0387  
[mblum@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:mblum@constitutioncenter.org)

**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER ANNOUNCES NEW *AMERICA'S TOWN HALL*  
PROGRAMS FOR FALL 2021**

***Speakers include William Allen, Martha Jones, Gloria Browne-Marshall, Rafael Mangual, Douglas Laycock, Maggie Blackhawk, Ellen Carol DuBois, Jack Rakove, and others***

***Topics include religious exemptions, qualified immunity for police officers, patriotism and dissent, Black women and representation, poetry and the Constitution, Lincoln's speeches, and equality in America***

Philadelphia, PA (September 29, 2021) – Today, the National Constitution Center released a lineup of new programs as part of its *America's Town Hall* series of constitutional conversations and debates. Programs are free to the public and will be held online.

Below is a full list of online programs, including conversations on Native Americans and the Constitution on November 19, in celebration of Native American History Month, and on the meaning of equality on December 15, in honor of Bill of Rights Day. Additional programs to be added. Up-to-date program information is available at [constitutioncenter.org/debate](https://constitutioncenter.org/debate).

**Upcoming *America's Town Hall* programming:**

**Religious Exemptions From the Founding to Today**

Thursday, September 30, 11 a.m. ET

*Free Online*

The Supreme Court today is vigorously debating the scope of religious exemptions. Under the Constitution, are religious individuals and organizations excused from following generally applicable laws? On the heels of the *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* (2021) decision, legal experts **Douglas Laycock**, author of the five-volume series *The Collected Works on Religious Liberty*; **Vincent Phillip Muñoz**, author of *God and the Founders*; and **Kathleen Brady**, author of *The Distinctiveness of Religion in American Law*, join for a conversation exploring the historical and current debates about religious exemptions. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates. *This program is presented in partnership with the **University of Notre Dame's Center for Citizenship & Constitutional Government**.*

**For Debate: Should Qualified Immunity for Police Officers Be Abolished?**

Thursday, October 7, 12 p.m. ET

*Free Online*

The National Constitution Center and WHYY present a conversation exploring a major issue at the forefront of the national police reform debate—qualified immunity. **Gloria Browne-Marshall**, professor of constitutional law at John Jay College of Criminal Justice; **Leonard Kesten**, an attorney who has litigated hundreds of cases involving the application of qualified immunity; and **Rafael Mangual**, senior fellow and head of research for the Policing and Public Safety Initiative at the

Manhattan Institute, join moderator **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, to discuss what the doctrine is and whether it needs to be reformed. *This program is presented in partnership with **WHYY's Your Democracy** initiative, supported by the **Sutherland Family**.*

### **Patriotism and Dissent in America**

Wednesday, October 13, 7 p.m. ET

*Free Online*

Historians **Allen Guelzo** of Princeton University and **Sophia Rosenfeld** of the University of Pennsylvania join political philosopher **Steven Smith** of Yale University for a timely discussion exploring Smith's newest book, *Reclaiming Patriotism in an Age of Extremes*. The conversation will explore some of the key episodes of patriotism and dissent throughout American history—from the Revolution through the Founding and the Civil War to today—and highlight what patriotism has meant over time, and why deliberation is key to its future. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates.

### **The Crisis of Two Constitutions: The Founders' vs. The Peoples'**

Tuesday, October 26, 12 p.m. ET

*Free Online*

How should we understand and tell the story of American constitutional development over time? Professors **Wilfred Codrington III** of Brooklyn Law School and **Charles Kesler** of Claremont McKenna College discuss the different narratives of that development as explored in their newest books: Codrington's *The People's Constitution* and Kesler's *The Crisis of Two Constitutions*. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates.

### **Black Women, Representation, and the Constitution**

Tuesday, November 9, 7 p.m. ET

*Free Online*

With the passage of the 19th and 15th Amendments more than 100 years ago, African American women's suffrage became part of the Constitution. Yet the history of the struggle for Black women's suffrage and representation is lesser known and is still developing today. Panelists including **Nadia Brown**, associate professor of political science and African American studies at Purdue University and Idol Family Fellow at the Anne Welsh McNulty Institute at Villanova University, and **Martha Jones**, author of *Vanguard*, join for a discussion on the history of Black women in America's representative democracy, including their roles as suffrage advocates, voters, and representatives, from Sojourner Truth to Shirley Chisholm. *This program is made possible through the generous support of the **McNulty Foundation** in partnership with the **Anne Welsh McNulty Institute for Women's Leadership** at Villanova University and as part of the Center's **Women and the Constitution** initiative.*

### **Native Americans and the Constitution**

Friday, November 19, 11 a.m. ET

*Free Online*

In celebration of Native American Heritage Month, experts **Maggie Blackhawk**, professor at New York University School of Law, **Woody Holton**, professor at the University of South Carolina and author of *Liberty Is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution*, and others join for a conversation exploring the influence of indigenous people and tribal governments on the U.S. Constitution and American democracy, from before the Revolution to today. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates. *This program is made possible with support from **TD Bank**.*

## **The Meaning of Equality in America**

Wednesday, December 15, 12 p.m. ET

*Free Online*

Where did the idea that “all men are created equal” come from, and what did those words mean when Thomas Jefferson wrote them in the Declaration of Independence? What has equality meant in America over time—and what does it mean today? **William Allen**, emeritus professor of political philosophy and emeritus dean at James Madison College at Michigan State University, **Erika Bachiochi**, fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, **Ellen Carol DuBois**, distinguished research professor at UCLA, and **Jack Rakove**, professor of history and political science at Stanford University, join to explore the idea of equality throughout American history. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates. *This program is made possible through the generous support of **Citizens**.*

### **Coming this fall:**

#### **Lincoln’s Speeches and the Refounding of America**

*Free Online*

**Michael Burlingame**, author of *The Black Man’s President: Abraham Lincoln, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Equality*; **Diana Schaub**, author of *His Greatest Speeches: How Lincoln Moved the Nation*; and others take a deep dive into the timeless speeches of one of America’s greatest presidents to reveal Lincoln’s constitutional vision and how his vision changed the course of the Constitution and American history. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates.

#### **Poetry and the Constitution**

*Free Online*

How have poets and poetry—from John Milton to Mercy Otis Warren to Ralph Waldo Emerson— influenced the Constitution and America’s core democratic principles? **Vincent Carretta**, editor of the Penguin Classics editions of the *Complete Writings of Phillis Wheatley*, **Eileen Hunt**, professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, **Eric Slauter**, associate professor of English and director of the Karla Scherer Center for the Study of American Culture at the University of Chicago, and others join for a discussion exploring the ways poetry has intersected with the Constitution and constitutional ideas throughout American history. **Jeffrey Rosen**, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, moderates.

The National Constitution Center’s *America’s Town Hall* series features distinguished leaders, scholars, authors, and journalists who speak on the most significant constitutional topics of our time. The Center’s online *America’s Town Hall* programs are free. Viewers can register for the Zoom sessions at [constitutioncenter.org/debate](https://constitutioncenter.org/debate) or watch from [youtube.com/ConstitutionCenter](https://youtube.com/ConstitutionCenter). Archived *America’s Town Hall* programs can be found on the *Interactive Constitution* at [constitutioncenter.com/interactive-constitution/media-library](https://constitutioncenter.com/interactive-constitution/media-library).

###

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

The [National Constitution Center](https://constitutioncenter.org) in Philadelphia brings together people of all ages and perspectives, across America and around the world, 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 **Headquarters for Civic Education**, the Center delivers the best educational programs and online resources that inspire citizens and engage all Americans in learning about the U.S. Constitution. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit [constitutioncenter.org](http://constitutioncenter.org).