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**THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER LAUNCHES MAJOR INITIATIVE BOLSTERING
CIVIC EDUCATION AND CIVIL DIALOGUE**

Unique coalition of support will enable Classroom Exchanges program to connect 10,000 students across the country for real-time constitutional dialogue

Philadelphia, PA (September 17, 2019) – Today, on Constitution Day, the National Constitution Center officially launched the *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition*, the cornerstone of a path-breaking initiative to equip teachers with innovative, nonpartisan constitutional resources to educate students across the nation about the U.S. Constitution. The *Classroom Edition* adds educational materials to the *Interactive Constitution*, which has received over 25 million unique views since it launched in 2015. It includes the Center’s new **Classroom Exchanges**, a unique new platform for uniting classrooms from across the country for civil dialogue about the Constitution moderated by judges and master teachers.

With the support of the College Board, which has encouraged all 25,000 Advanced Placement teachers to sign their students up for the Exchanges, the National Constitution Center has already enrolled teachers from 32 states. The Center aspires to reach more than 3 million AP students with the Exchanges, as well as bring underserved students to the National Constitution Center through its **Constitutional Ambassadors** program where they will learn about the Constitution in person and then sign up for an online Exchange.

“The National Constitution Center is thrilled to launch the *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition* as America’s leading platform for constitutional education and debate,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen. “The Classroom Exchanges on the new platform will convene thousands of students across America, from different states and different perspectives, for civil conversations about the Constitution. A one-stop, free platform for the best educational material on every clause of the Constitution, the new *Interactive Constitution* has the potential to transform the way students learn the skills of civil dialogue while also learning about the text, history, and meaning of the U.S. Constitution.”

The *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition* is a cutting-edge multimedia digital platform that provides trusted nonpartisan constitutional resources including videos; podcasts; lesson plans; the Drafting Table, which allows users to explore early drafts of constitutional text; and other multimedia resources that build on the success of the first edition of the *Interactive Constitution*, which has already received over 25 million unique views since its launch on Constitution Day 2015.

Teachers can use the *Classroom Edition* resources to prepare students for the Classroom Exchanges, a program which connects classrooms across the country for real-time moderated dialogues about constitutional issues that affect students’ lives, such as whether and when the First Amendment allows students to be disciplined for their speech. Following a successful pilot program that began in September 2018 and reached over 2,300 students in 92 classrooms in 27 states, the National

Constitution Center opened the new online sign-up platform on Tuesday, September 3, with teachers in 32 states registering for Constitution Day and beyond.

With the Classroom Exchanges, the National Constitution Center expects to reach over 10,000 students in the 2019-2020 school year thanks to the generous support of the **Bezos Family Foundation**, the **Charles Koch Foundation**, and the **Laura and Gary Lauder Family Venture Philanthropy Fund**. Through this unique coalition of lead funders, the National Constitution Center will expand the program over a three-year period.

The *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition* is made possible by the broad support of individuals and organizations, including the Achelis & Bodman Foundation, the Bezos Family Foundation, the Charles Koch Foundation, the College Board, the Hertog Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation, the Laura and Gary Lauder Family Venture Philanthropy Fund, the Snider Foundation, The Stanton Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

“In this era of scorched-earth political debate and deeply personal online attacks, it’s critically important that high school students exercise and fully understand their First Amendment rights,” said Stefanie Sanford, Chief of Global Policy and External Relations at the College Board, which is partnering with the NCC to engage Advanced Placement students in Classroom Exchanges. “To help them become engaged citizens, we need honest, innovative programs that make the Constitution vivid. These exchanges will show this generation that democracy is a glorious, vibrant, and sometimes messy thing, and that its future is in their hands.”

“Never before has civic education been more crucial for the next generation,” said Laura Lauder of the Laura and Gary Lauder Family Venture Philanthropy Fund. “We are thrilled to support the National Constitution Center’s Classroom Exchanges to engage all high school students in thoughtful, respectful, non-political debate and dialogue around our precious Constitution.” Lauder continued, “The new online *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition* unlocks the NCC’s wealth of educational resources and leverages video technology to connect students across the country to the Constitution and each other.”

“Young people need opportunities to gain civic knowledge about constitutional issues and engage in dialogue to expand their thinking and share their views respectfully,” said Mike Bezos, Vice President of the Bezos Family Foundation. “Through its *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition*, the National Constitution Center is democratizing access and enabling more students to apply this knowledge within their own lives and their communities.”

“The National Constitution Center is getting students access to the tools and practice to engage in dialogue at a time we need it most,” said Charles Koch Institute Director of Free Expression Sarah Ruger. “We’re excited to join with College Board, Lauder, and Bezos in bringing this innovative program to teachers across the country.”

Along with the *Interactive Constitution: Classroom Edition* and Classroom Exchanges, the National Constitution Center today launched its Constitutional Ambassadors program. Through a unique partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, the Center aims to welcome tens of thousands of Philadelphia-area students to the National Constitution Center for a new and immersive experience in constitutional education. Through a daylong intellectual, social, and skills-based educational experience at the National Constitution Center, participants in the Constitutional Ambassadors program will learn the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, participate in peer exchanges, and bring civil dialogue

practices back to their classrooms. They will then sign up for the Classroom Exchanges as Constitutional Ambassadors, serving as what Dr. William Hite, superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, calls “beacons of light” to connect with other classrooms across America.

With the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Bill of Fiscal Year 2005, teachers employed at public institutions are required to teach the Constitution on Constitution Day, September 17. By combining online resources, live synchronous constitutional exchanges opportunities, and immersive, on-site educational experiences, the National Constitution Center will help teachers students and learners of all ages across America educate themselves about the Constitution.

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About the National Constitution Center

The [National Constitution Center](http://www.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.