

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOES THE CONSTITUTION PROTECT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE? HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACROSS COUNTRY TO DECIDE JANUARY 21

***THE EXCHANGE* AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER FEATURES HOT BUTTON ISSUES AND RESPECTFUL DELIBERATION**

Philadelphia, PA (January 4, 2010) – Students from schools across the country will discuss whether or not it is constitutional to bar same-sex couples from marrying, during ***The Exchange*** at the National Constitution Center on Thursday, January 21, 2010, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. EST. SuChin Pak, of “G Word” on the Planet Green Network, will host.

The Exchange engages high school students in deliberation about current constitutional issues in a national videoconference format that promotes mutual respect. During this installment of *The Exchange*, students will examine various perspectives on same-sex marriage and will discuss the impact of the Defense of Marriage Act, the *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* decision, Proposition 8, and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

Journalists **Jonathan Chait** and **John J. Miller** will participate, sharing their own contrasting views and asking students questions related to the topic. Chait is a senior editor at *The New Republic* and a former assistant editor of *The American Prospect*. Miller writes for *The National Review* and *The Wall Street Journal*, among other publications.

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Students will take part in the deliberation both at the Center and via video conference.

Participating schools include:

- Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM*
- Denbigh High School Newport News, VA*
- Menifee County High School Frenchburg, KY*
- Middletown Area High School Middletown, PA*
- R.A. Millikan High School Long Beach, CA*
- Science & Leadership Academy Philadelphia, PA
- Spring Grove High School Spring Grove, PA*
- Springfield High School Springfield, PA
- Wakefield High School Arlington, VA*

* Denotes school participating via Internet2

Any school in the country can view a live broadcast of the event at www.constitutioncenter.org/exchange, where curricular material to support classroom discussion of the topic is also available.

Prior to *The Exchange*, participating schools will receive a curriculum poster developed by the education staff at the Center to encourage student examination and evaluation of same-sex marriage from a variety of perspectives. The front side of the poster is designed to initiate the conversation with a Town Hall Wall, a format pioneered at the Center and used in its main exhibition, which presents the fundamentals of an issue and various options for its resolution. The opposite side of the poster, created for teachers, displays the curriculum, including lesson plans and student handouts.

SuChin Pak is the host of "G Word," a daily news series about innovation in the environmental space, on the Planet Green Network. Prior to joining the Planet Green Network, Pak served as an MTV News correspondent. While part of the MTV news team, she co-hosted MTV's pre-Grammy show and covered the MTV Video Music Awards, the MTV Movie Awards, and the Sundance Film Festival. Pak was also an integral part of MTV's 2004 *Choose or Lose* Campaign, which sought to encourage young people to vote. In addition, she covered the September 11th tragedy, contributing

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segments about young volunteers and Muslim-American women. In 2005, Pak traveled to Thailand to cover the aftermath of the tsunami. Following Hurricane Katrina, she visited Baton Rouge to report on college students at Louisiana State University who aided rescue and recovery efforts. Born in Korea, Pak and her family moved to the Bay Area when she was five years old. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in political science.

The scholarly advisor for this installment of *The Exchange* is **Nancy J. Knauer**, professor of law at Temple University's Beasley School of Law, where she teaches in the areas of political and civil rights, property, sexuality and the law, taxation, and trusts and estates. Knauer has written and lectured widely on issues involving same-sex relationships, including domestic violence, estate planning, and survivor benefits. In 2002, she was named a University "Great Teacher" and was a co-recipient of the first annual CPR Dispute Resolution Award for teaching problem solving in the law school. Knauer is also a three-time recipient of the George P. Williams Award for excellence in teaching and the recipient of the 2004 Friel-Scanlon award.

Dr. J. Michael Hogan will moderate this installment of *The Exchange*. Hogan is the co-director of the Center for Democratic Deliberation of Pennsylvania State University. His research interests include political campaigns and social movements, foreign policy debates, presidential rhetoric, and public opinion and polling. He is the author of three books, *The Panama Canal in American Politics*, *The Nuclear Freeze Campaign*, and *Woodrow Wilson's Western Tour*. Hogan has served on the editorial board of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, and he currently serves on the editorial board of *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. He holds a master's degree and a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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The Exchange is made possible with generous support from the Annenberg Foundation and Scholastic Inc. Previous *Exchange* programs have focused on topics such as religious expression in schools, immigration, and the balance of school safety and student constitutional rights. During the most recent *Exchange* program, students discussed the issue of healthcare reform in the United States. For more information, please contact Jason Allen at 215.409.6644 or jallen@constitutioncenter.org.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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