

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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VISITORS CAN SEE SIGNED COPY OF BARACK OBAMA'S RACE SPEECH AT THE CONSTITUTION CENTER

Philadelphia, PA – It has been called a pivotal moment of the 2008 presidential campaign: **Barack Obama's Race Speech at the Constitution Center**. Already considered one of the most stirring examples of American political rhetoric, the original signed copy of the speech – which was delivered from the Center's Kirby Auditorium on March 18, 2008 – is on display at the National Constitution Center.

"It is fitting that President Obama chose to deliver this seminal speech here at the Center, in the shadow of Independence Hall. We are the country's only museum dedicated to the enduring importance of the Constitution and the ongoing struggle to create a 'more perfect Union,'" said National Constitution Center President and CEO Linda E. Johnson. "We are proud to share this important document with our visitors."

The speech was first on display in the Center's *Headed to the White House* exhibition, which ran from September 17 through December 14, 2008. Visitors can currently view the document in the *America I AM: The African American Imprint* exhibition through May 3, 2009. Following the run of *America I AM*, the speech will become a part of the Center's permanent exhibition, *The Story of We the People*.

The Race Speech at the Constitution Center stands alongside other unforgettable campaign speeches, such as Lincoln's Cooper Union address and Kennedy's speech on religion. In the *New York Review of Books*, historian Gary Wills compared the Race Speech at the Constitution Center to Lincoln's Cooper Union address, stating, "Each decided to address them openly in a prominent national venue, well before their parties' nominating conventions – Lincoln at the Cooper Union in New York, Obama at the Constitution Center in Philadelphia."

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ADD ONE/RACE SPEECH AT THE CONSTITUTION CENTER

When discussing the 2008 presidential campaign, George Stephanopoulos of ABC News cited the Race Speech at the Constitution Center as one of three speeches that served as a turning point for Barack Obama. He said, "When his campaign was in peril because of his ties to Rev. Wright, Barack Obama made that remarkable speech about race and his own journey, and his relationship with Wright in Philadelphia. That held his campaign together; a very key moment."

MSNBC's Chris Matthews called the Race Speech at the Constitution Center the "best speech ever given on race in this country," and said, "This is the kind of speech I think first graders should see, people in the last year of college should see before they go out in the world. This should be, to me, an American tract."

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. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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