



Brooklyn Public Library Launches the 28TH Amendment Project

Year-Long Series Held at Library Branches, High Schools, and Prisons to Propose an Amendment to the United States Constitution, Crowd-Sourced by the Brooklyn Community

Brooklyn, NY – March 3, 2020 – **Brooklyn Public Library** (BPL) announced today the first dates of the **28th Amendment Project**, BPL's year-long civic engagement initiative to discuss, debate, and propose the next amendment to the United States Constitution. Ahead of the November 2020 elections, BPL's *28th Amendment Project* offers Brooklyn's nearly 2.7 million residents an opportunity to reflect on the fundamental principles on which the country was founded, and how those precedents should be adapted to address modern day realities, concerns, and hopes for the future at this critical time in history. Through the *28th Amendment Project*, BPL, along with the **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** and the **New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)**, which serve as the project's legal advisors, will facilitate a five month series of town hall meetings that provide Brooklyn's diverse communities with a forum to explore and exchange ideas for a more inclusive and reflective governance, providing a platform to the voices of those who have historically been disenfranchised.

"Through the 28th Amendment Project, Brooklyn Public Library is inviting the public to tell us how the US Constitution should next be amended. Our intent is to identify the 'blind spots' of the original Framers and to welcome the voices of those who were historically disenfranchised," said **Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO, Brooklyn Public Library**. "We invite all members of our communities to come together to examine our collective values, concerns and hopes for the future of Brooklyn and the nation."

"The Constitution is ours and this fact comes with responsibilities," said **László Jakab Orsós, Vice President of Arts and Culture at Brooklyn Public Library**. "In this vein, Brooklyn Public Library initiated this project providing a platform for our communities to understand the Constitution better and identify areas where the document is silent and needed to be corrected in order to serve us all better. The project is an exercise on democracy and helps us all to analyze, critique, and debate our society."

BPL, working with the ACLU and NYCLU, has enlisted artists, writers, journalists, and activists to lead 28th Amendment town hall meetings across Brooklyn at library branches and high schools beginning on March 5 and running through fall 2020, with additional sessions tentatively planned at correctional centers. Members of the ACLU will work with the moderators in advance of the meetings, along with law students that will be present at all sessions to capture the issues discussed. These events will allow attendees to give voice to the most important issues facing their communities today and will address how the U.S. Constitution supports or hinders the evolving contemporary society. To allow for the broadest possible participation, BPL will invite Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish translators to attend select town hall meetings and conduct sessions for the hearing impaired throughout the course of the project to ensure that all voices are represented.

Later this summer, "framers" who have been identified by BPL, will workshop, edit, and compose a written draft that crystallizes the public sentiments captured in the town halls. The final crowd-sourced text will

be ratified, printed, and distributed at all 59 BPL branches, other public institutions across the five boroughs, and online ahead of the national election in November. The final 28th Amendment proposal will be a robust, inclusive addition to ongoing national conversations about amending the constitution and will offer timely insights into Brooklyn's vision for the future.

The *28th Amendment Project* continues BPL Presents' innovative series of programs including University Open Air, a "pop-up" university with lectures and courses taught by immigrants, and *'Til Victory is Won*, which commemorated the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slave ship to North America. This year, the Library is also partnering with the City of New York to support critical outreach for and education about the 2020 Census to ensure that every Brooklyn resident, regardless of age, race, or immigration status, is fairly and accurately counted. These initiatives, along with the more than 60,000 free programs offered by the Library each year, expand the Library's role as a convener and a center for ideas and exploration and as a hub for civic engagement.

Initial confirmed Town Hall meetings are:

- **Tuesday, March 5 at 6:30PM – Macon Library** (361 Lewis Ave).
Moderated by Brian Tate and Brynna Tucker.
- **Tuesday, March 24 at 6PM – Sunset Park Library** (interim branch at 4201 Fourth Ave).
Moderated by David Rudenstine.
- **Thursday, April 2 at 7PM – Sheepshead Bay Library** (2636 E. 14th St).
Moderated by Carolyn Sauvage-Mar.
- **Saturday, April 25 at 2PM – Greenpoint Library** (107 Norman Ave).
Moderated by Raj Kottamasu.
- **Wednesday, May 13 at 7PM – Crown Heights Library** (560 New York Ave).
Moderated by Jamal Greene.
- **Tuesday, May 19 at 7PM – Brownsville Library** (61 Glenmore Ave).
Moderated by Carolyn Sauvage-Mar.
- Additional dates will be announced at a later time.

For more information about *28th Amendment Project* and a complete list of town halls, please visit <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/event-series/28th-amendment>

Brooklyn Public Library gratefully acknowledges the many donors who have provided generous support for BPL Presents programs, including: Cheryl and George Haywood Endowment for Cultural Diversity,

The Kahn Endowment for Humanities Programs, Dr. Beverly S. Jacobs, Janet Anderson, Todd Ferguson, The Miriam Katowitz and Arthur Radin Fund, Los Blancos, Mapleton Endowment, New York State Council on the Arts, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Sandra and Peter Schubert Endowment Fund, Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, The Weissman Family Foundation, Inc., Cultural Services of the French Embassy, City Point, WarnerMedia, the Estate of Pearl S. Reuillard in memory of her parents Yetta and Louis Schwartz and many other generous supporters.

Programs are also supported by Brooklyn Public Library's Fund for the Humanities which was established through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Hearst Foundation, Inc., Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Starr Foundation, the Leon and Muriel Gilbert Charitable Trust, Henry and Lucy Moses Fund, Inc. and a gift in memory of Samuel and Pauline Wine.

WNYC is a media partner of the 2020 BPL Presents Season.

###

Media Contacts

Sarah Morris / Katrina Reynolds / Josh Balber
Resnicow and Associates

smorris@resnicow.com / kreynolds@resnicow.com / jbalber@resnicow.com
212-671-5154 / 212-671-5184 / 212-671-5175

Fritzi Bodenheimer

Brooklyn Public Library

fbodenheimer@bklynlibrary.org

718-230-2402

About Brooklyn Public Library

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is an independent library system for the 2.7 million residents of Brooklyn. It is the sixth largest library system in the United States with 59 neighborhood libraries located throughout the borough. BPL offers free programs and services for all ages and stages of life, including a large selection of books in more than 30 languages, author talks, literacy programs, and public computers. BPL's eResources, such as eBooks and eVideos, catalog information, and free homework help, are available to customers of all ages 24 hours a day at our [website](#).