



Brooklyn Public Library's New "28TH Amendment Project" Moves Online

Allowing New Yorkers to Virtually Debate, Discuss, and Propose a New Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Launching via Zoom on Saturday, April 4, 2020

Brooklyn, NY – March 30, 2020 – As **Brooklyn Public Library (BPL)** continues to expand its online resources, the Library today announced that the **28th Amendment Project**, BPL's recently launched initiative to discuss, debate, and propose the next amendment to the U.S. Constitution, will now be available for Brooklyn residents and the greater New York community to **participate remotely** via Zoom starting **April 4, 2020**. With the guidance of the **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** and the **New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)**, who serve as the project's legal advisors, the 28th Amendment Project asks participants to consider how constitutional precedents should be adapted to address modern day realities, concerns, and hopes for the future, and to reflect on the changes to American life and values since the U.S. Constitution was last amended in 1992. Originally launched as an in-person town hall series to be held at library branches and schools throughout the borough, the reconceived virtual 28th Amendment Project provides a platform for communities across Brooklyn and around the country to reexamine America's founding principles at a time when COVID-19 is spotlighting societal and governmental structures once taken for granted.

Interested participants will be able to join the online "town halls" for free via Zoom, creating a virtual forum to explore ideas for a more inclusive and reflective governance. Reflecting the global search for new modes of social connection in this period of self-isolation, the 28th Amendment Project aims to provide an outlet for neighbors across Brooklyn and around the city to come together and discuss the foundational document of our democracy. The final document will be made public by BPL later this year.

"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 of 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."

For each virtual town hall, BPL has invited professional moderators and professors of constitutional law to lead the discussions. Members of the ACLU serve as advisers for the project and NYC law students will be present at all online sessions as note takers. These online 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 contemporary society. To allow for the broadest possible participation, BPL will work with translators to make select sessions available in Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish.

Later this year, “framers” who have been identified by BPL will workshop, edit, and compose a draft amendment that crystallizes the public sentiments captured in the town halls for an October release. 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 year-round programs, now online while physical library branches remain closed due to COVID-19. Additional upcoming virtual events include livestreams of the *Classical Interludes* performance by Kenan Adnawi; and *Til Victory is Won*, a teach-in observing the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans to the present-day United States. These initiatives, along with the more than 60,000 free programs offered by the BPL each year, expand the Library’s role as a center for ideas and exploration and as a hub for civic engagement.

Virtual town halls will be held on:

- **Saturday April 4 at 4:00 pm**
- **Tuesday April 7 at 7:00 pm**
- **Saturday April 11 at 4:00 pm**
- **Tuesday April 14 at 7:00 pm**
- **Saturday April 18 at 4:00 pm**
- **Tuesday April 21 at 7:00 pm**
- **Saturday April 25 at 4:00 pm**

Additional town halls will be added at a later date, including sessions with select high schools as part of their online learning programs.

For more information about 28th Amendment Project and to RSVP, please visit

<https://www.bklynlibrary.org/event-series/28th-amendment>

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

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About Brooklyn Public Library

[Brooklyn Public Library](#) is one of the nation's largest library systems and among New York City's most democratic institutions. As a leader in developing modern 21st century libraries, we provide resources to support personal advancement, foster civic literacy, and strengthen the fabric of community among the more than 2.6 million individuals who call Brooklyn home. We provide nearly 65,000 free programs a year with writers, thinkers, artists, and educators—from around the corner and around the world. And we give patrons millions of opportunities to enjoy one of life's greatest satisfactions: the joy of a good book.