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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE **EXHIBITION OVERVIEW**

Introduction

Electing a president is the fundamental act of American democracy – the only event on the civic calendar that involves the entire nation in a single act of citizenship. It's a chance – every four years – to discuss, debate, and decide the nation's direction and future.

Headed to the White House, created by the National Constitution Center, is the only exhibition of its kind, uniquely created for students, teachers, and families during the height of the election season. The exhibition is an engaging and provocative celebration of democracy and the power of "We the People."

Core Themes

Headed to the White House captures all of the excitement and pageantry of the extraordinary election process from the primaries through the presidential inauguration. Designed to promote voting during the presidential election and active citizenship every day, the exhibition will inspire Americans to start discussing, debating, and deciding the future of our nation.

The exhibition's overarching theme is that presidential elections are national conversations about the country's future. The challenges the country faces, and the election process itself, have changed over the course of history, but the great issues of war and peace and jobs and prosperity have been decided by voters over the ages.

Walking through the Exhibition

Visitors will be engaged in the election process from the moment they cross the gallery threshold. In a vestibule area, events from the 2008 campaign that took place at the National Constitution Center – including Barack Obama's March 18 speech on race, the Pennsylvania Democratic primary debate on April 16 between Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, and John McCain's Town Hall meeting on June 11 – will be featured. Included in this section is the original signed reading copy of Obama's historic address on race.

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ADD ONE/EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH

The exhibition itself is divided into four sections: **Orientation**, **You're in the Race**, **The Race is On**, and **Hail to the Chief**.

The **Orientation** features a surround audio experience with lighting effects and large-scale graphic images that introduce visitors to the remarkable political process that brings citizens together every four years to elect their president. The Orientation takes visitors through the history of elections and how they have changed over time. Here, the historic elections of 1840 (Martin Van Buren vs. William H. Harrison), 1932 (Herbert Hoover vs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt) and 2008 are presented through songs, slogans, and speeches. Visitors can also see a towering collection of over 200 campaign buttons from throughout history, from the collection of Alfio J. Brindisi of Wynnewood, PA. As visitors progress through the Orientation area, they head toward a large graphic image of the White House, which they pass through into the next section.

In the second section, **You're in the Race**, visitors move through a series of role-playing areas that introduce them to the electoral process. Depending on which path they follow, visitors can play the role of the candidate, a campaign manager, a journalist, or an active citizen. Each area features a mix of multimedia experiences, hands-on games, and computer interactives.

In the "Be a Candidate" role-playing area, visitors can imagine the challenges and opportunities of running for president. At various activity stations, presidential hopefuls can choose a political party, craft their vision for the nation's future, and work on their presidential image. Visitors can even collaborate with a speech coach to practice their speaking skills. After delivering each line, the computerized coach offers helpful tips in order to put together a thoughtful, inspiring message.

In the next role-playing area, "Get the Message Out," visitors experience the electoral process from the points of view of campaign staff and political reporters. As a campaign manager, visitors will need to make quick decisions to get their candidate through a day of campaigning in an inventive computer interactive. Will visitors give the candidate a day off or tell him to keep campaigning? Will they spend more money than budgeted to create more ads or cancel them? As a journalist, visitors select key questions for an interview, review their notes, determine the tone of their article, and choose a headline and photo to accompany the story. They can then see their story as it will appear on the front page of the newspaper the following day. A special highlight of this section gives visitors an interactive opportunity to produce and star in their own video campaign commercial, using the presidential "Ad-O-Matic" machine. A web version of this computer interactive will allow people to create a campaign ad at home and send it to friends, as well.

"Be an Active Citizen," the final role-playing area, engages students and families with the various ways they can become actively involved in the presidential contest, from learning more about the issues and candidates, to volunteering as a campaign worker, to voting. Using the Center's signature "talk back" walls, visitors can share their opinions about which candidate they are supporting and why by writing their responses on Post-It notes. They can also create their own campaign stickers to show their support and learn how

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ADD TWO/EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH

young citizens across the country are participating in the election, as reported by youth journalists from Y-Press. Through a partnership with Scholastic, Inc., young visitors will also have an opportunity, via the Internet, to suggest questions that Scholastic Kid Reporters should ask the candidates.

Videos throughout the You're in the Race section feature interviews with campaign workers and journalists, who describe what it's like to be on the presidential campaign trail.

In the third exhibition section, **The Race is On**, visitors embark on their journey from the primaries and caucuses to the national party conventions before hitting the campaign trail. In the "Primaries and Caucuses" area, visitors learn more about the primary election process and how they are run across the country. A recreation of the floor of a national convention holds election information from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the territories, allowing visitors to look up primary information for their state and the results from the 2008 election. Next, visitors move into the "Convention" area, where they can see footage from the recent 2008 Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

Continuing along the presidential path, visitors experience the general-election campaign and Election Day. In "Getting Out the Vote," visitors hit the campaign trail in the whirlwind months leading up to the presidential election. They can practice their handshake, stand at the podiums where Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama stood during the Democratic presidential primary debate at the National Constitution Center, and view video clips from historic presidential debates. Then, visitors can experience the excitement of Election Day and cast their vote before the polls close. An Election Big Board keeps visitors up-to-date on the latest results as they come in.

To conclude the exhibition, visitors will experience the triumph of finally reaching the White House in **Hail to the Chief**. Guests can stroll along the inaugural parade route featuring a history of presidential celebrations, ceremonies, and galas. Then, they can learn the responsibilities and perks of the office they are about to assume before settling in at the Oval Office for the perfect presidential photo-op.

Headed to the White House

September 17, 2008 through December 14, 2008
National Constitution Center in Philadelphia

Admission to *Headed to the White House* \$15 for adults, \$14 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$9 for children ages 4-12. Active military personnel and children ages 3 and under are free. Group rates are also available. Admission to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, including the award-winning theater production "Freedom Rising", is included. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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ADD THREE/EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH

Headed to the White House was made possible through the generous support of The Annenberg Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and is sponsored locally by Pennoni Associates and Beneficial Bank. CBS 3 is the official media partner for the exhibition.
