PITTSBURGH, Oct. 14, 2020 – As Americans navigate through a global pandemic, a social revolution, and political strife leading up to the 2020 election, the importance of history and civics education in our region and nation is evident now more than ever.

The Senator John Heinz History Center – the Smithsonian’s home in Pittsburgh – is taking action with the launch of a new mobile app, virtual programs, a Smithsonian exhibition, and educational resources beginning this fall as part of its America 101 history and civics initiative.

The museum’s America 101 initiative empowers citizens to know and act on the promise of the country’s founders, enabling people today to write the next chapter of our democracy.

“As we experience one of the most turbulent years in our nation’s history, our mission at the History Center to present and interpret American history so that citizens can make better decisions in the present and plan for the future has never been more relevant,” said Andy Masich, president and CEO of the Heinz History Center. “Our America 101 initiative serves as a national model for how history museums can stimulate dialogue, encourage informed participation, and inspire potential change-makers who will shape the future of our democracy.”

Highlights of the educational initiative include:

**Citizen You App** – The intuitive and easy-to-use Citizen You mobile app is designed to foster civic engagement by gamifying everyday civic actions. The FREE app helps bring together citizens of all ages to compete in challenges and earn points for a variety of civic-minded activities including attending local council meetings, helping a neighbor in need, and (most importantly) voting! Search “Citizen You” on the App Store or Google Play to download the app.

**Collecting American Elections (Oct. 27 at 8 p.m.)**
The History Center, Smithsonian Affiliations, and the National Museum of American History will co-present a virtual roundtable discussion of scholars discussing the hard choices and years of experience that they bring to collecting objects and documents from presidential campaigns for the nation’s collection. Lisa Kathleen Graddy, Jon Grinspan, and Claire Jerry from the Division of Political and Military History will share their favorite campaign artifacts from the Smithsonian’s collection, and will bring a diverse perspective to how Americans elect leaders and what messages the objects of campaigns convey about their times. To register, [click here](#).
Teaching Civics: A Regional Summit to Prepare for Act 35 (Oct. 28 and 30) – As school districts across the state prepare for Act 35, which requires a test of civic proficiency for secondary school students, the History Center, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement, and other state-wide partners in civics learning are joining to provide teachers and administrators with resources for creating and assessing activities that promote civic knowledge, skills, and action. To register, click here.

Polling Place: Election Day (Nov. 3) – The History Center will serve as a polling place on Election Day 2020 for the first time in museum history. The museum will work with the League of Women Voters and other local organizations to register voters prior to the election.

Made by Us – The History Center is helping to lead a national coalition that presents history in relevant, provocative, and innovative ways. The Made By Us steering committee includes leaders from the Heinz History Center, Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, National Archives, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, New-York Historical Society, Atlanta History Center, HistoryMiami, and Missouri Historical Society.

For more information and to register for America 101 public programs, visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org/america-101.

History Center Announces New Smithsonian Exhibition Opening March 2021

Opening at the History Center in March 2021, America’s national treasures will come to life in a compelling new exhibition, American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith, which examines the bold experiment to create a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

The exhibition, developed in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and the National Museum of American History, will explore the history of citizen participation, debate, and compromise from the nation’s formation to today. Through objects, interactives, and immersive galleries, the exhibit will focus on the changing political ideals and principles of the nation, citizenship in a pluralistic society, and political participation and engagement.

These 2020-21 programs and exhibits are part of the museum’s ongoing America 101 initiative. Previously, the History Center has hosted the award-winning “Be the Change: 9th Grade Civics Summit” program, U.S. naturalization ceremonies, American flag folding events, and other forums to discuss issues such as civics, government, immigration, and history. Ultimately, the America 101 initiative’s goal is by 2026 – America’s 250th anniversary – citizens in Western Pa. and beyond will be more knowledgeable about American history, able to pass the history and civics portion of the U.S. citizenship test, and empowered to take action as better citizens.

America 101 is sponsored by the Nimick Forbesway Foundation and the Charity Randall Foundation.

The Senator John Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and the largest history museum in Pennsylvania, presents American history with a Western Pennsylvania connection. The History Center and Sports Museum are located at 1212 Smallman Street in the city’s Strip District. The History Center’s museum system includes the Sports Museum; the Fort Pitt Museum in historic Point State Park; and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, a National Historic Landmark located in Avella, Pa. in Washington County. More information is available at www.heinzhistorycenter.org.