



Smithsonian

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Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Examining Democracy in America Opens in Tampa

Opening reception March 23, 2024; Exhibition runs through May 19, 2024

(MARCH 22, 2024—TAMPA) The Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street, in cooperation with Florida Humanities, presents **"Voices and Votes: Democracy in America."** The exhibition examines the nearly 250-year-old American experiment of a government "of, by and for the people," and how each generation since continues to question how to form "a more perfect union." **Opening at Sulphur Springs Museum and Heritage Center with a special opening reception from 1-3 p.m., March 23, "Voices and Votes" will be on view through May 19, 2024.**

Sulphur Springs Museum and the surrounding community were chosen by Florida Humanities to host "Voices and Votes" as part of the Museum on Main Street program — a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. **The exhibition will tour a total of five communities in Florida from March 2024 through January 2025: Tampa, Okeechobee, Gainesville, Cape Coral and Leesburg.**

"Voices and Votes" explores the action, reaction, vision and revision that democracy demands as Americans continue to question how to shape the country. From the revolution and suffrage, to civil rights and casting ballots, everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story — the story of democracy in America. Exhibition sections explore the origins of American democracy, the struggles to obtain and keep the vote, the machinery of democracy, the right to petition and protest beyond the ballot and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. "Voices and Votes" features historical and contemporary photos; educational and archival video; engaging multimedia interactives with short games; and historical objects, such as campaign souvenirs, voter memorabilia, and protest material.

The museum will host [series of public programs](#) to complement the Smithsonian exhibition featuring scholars from the University of South Florida and University of Central Florida:

- Sunday, April 7, 2 p.m. | *Racial Subordination & the Meaning of Democracy*
- Sunday, April 21, 2 p.m. | *Politicking Politely: Women Making a Difference in the 1960s and 1970s*
- Sunday, May 5, 2 p.m. | *The Act That Ruined America, and How to Fix It*
- Sunday, May 19, 2 p.m. | *Contemporary Challenges to Im/migrant Rights*

Designed for small-town museums, libraries and cultural organizations, "Voices and Votes" will serve as a community meeting place for conversations about democracy, the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, participating in government, and more. With the support and

guidance of Florida Humanities, these towns will develop complementary exhibits, host public programs and facilitate educational initiatives to raise people's understanding about their own history, the joys and challenges of living rural, how change has impacted their community, and prompt discussion of goals for the future.

"Voices and Votes" is based on an exhibition from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History called "American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith." The exhibition is part of Museum on Main Street (MoMS), a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host institutions. To learn more about "Voices and Votes," and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit museumonmainstreet.org.

Support for MoMS has been provided by the U.S. Congress. Support for the local exhibition and programming of "Voices and Votes: Democracy in America" was provided through a grant from Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of Florida Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Venue Information:

Sulphur Springs Museum and Heritage Center

1101 E. River Cove Street, Tampa, FL 33604

813-935-9402

Open Wednesday - Saturday: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays during special events

\$5 admission, per person

www.sulphurspringsmuseum.org

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About Florida Humanities

[Florida Humanities](http://www.floridahumanities.org), the statewide, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is dedicated to preserving, promoting, and sharing the history, literature, cultures, and personal stories that offer Floridians a better understanding of themselves, their communities, and their state. Since 1973, Florida Humanities has awarded more than \$20 million in support of statewide cultural resources and public programs strongly rooted in the humanities. These programs preserve Florida's diverse history and heritage, promote civic engagement and community dialogue, and provide opportunities to reflect on the future of Florida. Learn more at www.floridahumanities.org.

About Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 65 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit sites.si.edu.

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