



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
AMERICAN JEWISH  
HISTORY  
A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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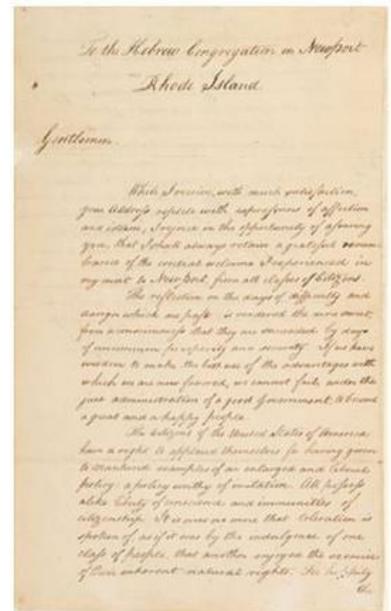
**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY GEARS UP  
FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION (DNC)**

**Foundational documents by George Washington displayed together for the first time**  
**Free admission for DNC Volunteers; Two-for-one admission for Convention Attendees**

Philadelphia, PA - The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) is a uniquely relevant destination for those visiting Philadelphia for the DNC. The Museum will be open every day the week of July 25 and will offer free admission to convention volunteers and 2-for-1 admission to convention attendees. Starting on June 28, in time for both the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the DNC, two **original** foundational documents by George Washington will be on view together for the first time:

**1790 letter to Hebrew Congregation of Newport, RI**

In this letter, which is on long-term loan to NMAJH, the nation's first president proclaims "that the government gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance," underscoring the new nation's commitment to religious liberty and equality for people of

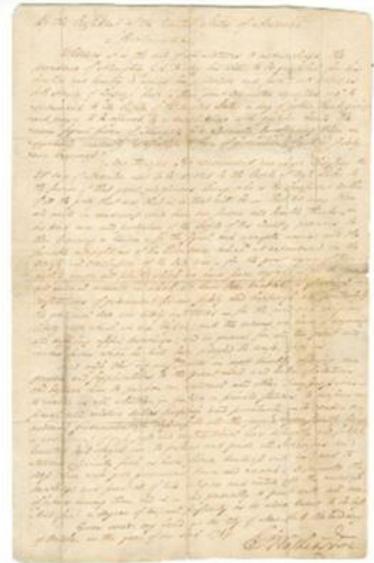


Letter from George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, August, 1790  
Courtesy of the Morris Morgenstern Foundation

all faiths. This iconic foundational document continues to be referenced to this day, recently having been cited in Justice Kagan's dissenting opinion on the Hobby Lobby case.

### **Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1789**

In celebration of the ratification of the Constitution, in 1789 Congress requested that President George Washington declare a national day of thanksgiving. Washington responded and wrote in the official presidential proclamation that November 26 would "be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being." The proclamation does not reference any particular faith or community. Instead, it finds the divine hand in the "peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness," and particularly in America's best ideals, "the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed." The proclamation foreshadows the 1790 letter referenced above. In recognition of George Washington's proclamation of this "day of public Thanksgiving and prayer," Jacob I. Cohen of Richmond's Congregation Beth Shalome composed the **Richmond Prayer (1789)**, which will be on view in the same gallery, and which offered heartfelt praise for the new nation and its leaders, spelling out "Washington" in Hebrew along its right-hand side. Though Washington declared a day of Thanksgiving across the nation with this proclamation, observances were overseen at the state level until Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving a federal holiday in 1863. Also presented with the 1790 letter and the Thanksgiving Proclamation will be an original copy of the **October 22, 1789 issue of the *United States Chronicle*** from Providence, RI. The paper includes a printing of the GW Thanksgiving proclamation as well as the 12 amendments to the Constitution proposed by congress and under review by the states. The states eventually ratified 10 of them, which become the Bill of Rights. The **Ratification of the Bill of Rights by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from March 11, 1790** will also be on view.



George Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation, October 3, 1789  
Private Collector, courtesy of Seth Kaller Inc.



*United States Chronicle*, October 22, 1789,  
Providence, Rhode Island  
Collection of David Rubenstein

In addition to the documents mentioned above, starting on July 11, NMAJH will feature a highlights case on the first floor of the Museum, where general admission is always free, showcasing the **role friend and business partner Eddie Jacobson played in Harry Truman's 1948 decision to recognize the newly created the State of Israel**. The Museum will also be offering **two topical self-guided themed tours through the core exhibition**, one on the theme of politics and the other on immigration.

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The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. **It will, however, be open on July 25 for the Democratic National Convention (DNC)**. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. From Memorial through Labor Day,\* the Museum stays open until 8 pm on Wednesday evenings. Admission after 5 is pay-what-you-wish. For more information, visit [NMAJH.org](http://NMAJH.org) or call 215.923.3811.

\*The Museum will be closed for a private event on July 27.