



## Brooklyn Public Library Reveals Crowd-Sourced Constitutional Amendment Representing the Voice of the People of Brooklyn

Accompanied by Performance from Artist Sheryl Oring and World Premiere of  
*Voters' Broadcast* by Composer Lisa Bielawa Between October 17-24 at  
BPL's Central Library on Grand Army Plaza

### 28th Amendment Now Live Online for Public Comment

Brooklyn, NY— October 17, 2020— **Brooklyn Public Library** (BPL) today unveiled its crowd-sourced amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the culmination of a nine-month initiative entitled the **28<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project** through which Brooklyn residents gathered through in-person and online town halls to discuss, debate, and propose an amendment that truly represents the voice of the people, especially including those who have been historically disenfranchised. Today's unveiling of the amendment text is accompanied by a new iteration of artist **Sheryl Oring's** *I Wish to Say* performance and the world premiere performances of **Lisa Bielawa's** transformative election year composition *Voters' Broadcast* at Brooklyn Public Library on Grand Army Plaza, and a combination of online and in-person performances from both artists will continue through next Saturday, October 24.

The final, one-page amendment follows below. The full text of the amendment including a long-form summary of all ideas shared throughout the town halls is now **live online at this link for further public discussion**. BPL encourages patrons to review the town hall notes and submit their own proposed revisions through this online portal, continuing this vital conversation over the coming weeks and months.

#### **AMENDMENT 28**

*Whereas the government of the United States should represent all of the people of the United States equally,*

*Section 1. The Electoral College shall be abolished and the President selected by popular vote; Senate membership shall be reallocated to reflect more accurately the distribution of the national population, with a minimum of one seat per state; Election Day shall be a national holiday; elections shall be publicly financed. All citizens of the United States, including those living in its territories and the District of Columbia, shall have the same electoral rights and representation as residents of a State; all citizens of voting age shall have the unencumbered right to vote in federal, state, and local elections. Congress shall have the power and obligation to enforce these provisions by appropriate legislation.*

*Section 2. In recognition of the inherent dignity of all persons, Congress shall have the power and obligation to enact appropriate legislation to secure all rights guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to education, healthcare, housing, employment, food security, and a clean and healthy environment.*

With the guidance of the project's legal advisors, the **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** and the **New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)**, the *28<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project* asked participants to consider how the U.S. Constitution, as a living document, should evolve to include historically disenfranchised voices, address modern day realities, and inspire a more hopeful future for all. Originally launched in March 2020 as a series of in-person town halls held at library branches throughout the borough, the reconceived virtual *28<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project* ran from late March through June 2020, providing a platform for communities across Brooklyn and around the country, including high schools and senior centers, to reexamine America's founding principles at a time when COVID-19 and nationwide Black Lives Matter protests revealed just how deeply societal and government structures shape our lives. Additional information on the *28<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project* process and final product can be found [here](#).

To celebrate the culmination of this nine-month endeavor, the *28th Amendment Project* "reveal" week will also include performances by musicians and artists exploring themes of civic engagement and participatory democracy. **Sheryl Oring** will present the first-ever dual in-person and online iteration of her heralded project *I Wish to Say*, for which the artist sets up a portable public office—complete with manual typewriters—and invites the public to dictate postcards to the next President of the United States. The in-person portion of the performance will take place on Saturday, October 17 from 1-3 p.m. and from 4-6 p.m. with eight typists stationed at socially distanced tables across the Central Library plaza. The online portion hosted via Zoom will run from October 18 to 21 from 6-8:00 p.m. Participants may register for an in-person or online session with a typist by visiting [this link](#).

Brooklyn Public Library will also host the world premiere live performance of composer Lisa Bielawa's *Voters' Broadcast*, co-presented by **Kaufman Music Center**. *Voters' Broadcast* is a broadly participatory new work by Bielawa, which uses text excerpted from Sheryl Oring's *I Wish to Say*. The work is designed to stimulate voter engagement, political awareness, and community participation by giving voice to the concerns of fellow citizens during the lead-up to the 2020 presidential election. On October 17, a soundscape created from the work will be broadcast during the intermission of Sheryl Oring's *I Wish to Say* from 3-4 p.m. and will feature Kaufman Music Center and University of Michigan, Ann Arbor vocalists. The following Saturday, October 24, socially distanced, in-person performances of Bielawa's piece—including new composed using texts from *I Wish to Say* postcards completed at BPL the week prior—will take place at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 2:00 p.m., performed by high school students from Kaufman Music Center's Special Music School (M. 859).

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*Voters' Broadcast is commissioned as part of the Democracy & Debate theme-semester by the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor with support from its School of Music, Theatre & Dance, and developed in partnership with Kaufman Music Center in New York*

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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 2.7 million individuals who call Brooklyn home. We provide nearly 60,000 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.

### **About Kaufman Music Center**

Kaufman Music Center transforms lives through music education and performance. Founded in 1952 as a community music school, today's Kaufman Music Center is leveling the playing field for kids all over NYC and beyond with innovative programs making music education accessible for 4,000 students of all ages and backgrounds each year at Special Music School; Lucy Moses School, a community arts school for all ages; and groundbreaking teen new music programs like Face the Music and Luna Composition Lab. At Merkin Hall, more than 50,000 audience members each year connect with music at performances ranging from classical to cutting-edge.

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