



ARCHIVES PLAZA • 1020 O STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814 • CaliforniaMuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2016

“Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016” opens May 17 at the California Museum

Developed in partnership with Secretary of State Alex Padilla & the California State Archives, all-new exhibit seeks to educate & inspire Californians to vote on June 7 & November 8

Sacramento, Calif., (May 11, 2016) – Developed by the California Museum in partnership with California Secretary of State Alex Padilla and the California State Archives, “Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016” opens on Tues., May 17, 2016. A chronicle of over 165 years of the state’s election history, the all-new exhibit explores the evolution of how Californians vote, from paper ballots used in the 1850s to a computer-based prototype of the future, while examining historic elections and the changing ways campaigns get their messages across. Through hundreds of artifacts on loan from the California State Archives, California State Library, Sacramento State, California State Parks and private collectors, the exhibit seeks to inspire voting in 2016 elections and reveals California voters have always held the power to shape the future.

“California’s democracy is deeply rooted in the power of the people—citizens casting ballots to choose our leaders and shape our future,” Secretary of State Alex Padilla said. “While millions of Californians prepare for 2016 elections, it is important to look back at the impact of elections throughout our history. I commend the work of the California Museum and California State Archives to provide an exciting and informative look at campaigns and voting in the Golden State.”

“This election year seems turbulent, but visitors to this exhibit will learn about even wilder eras in California. They’ll see campaign materials from some of the 135 candidates who ran for Governor in 2003; the first absentee ballots, sent home by soldiers fighting in the Civil War in 1864; and even headgear that spouted fire, used in torchlight campaign parades of the 1800s,” said California Museum Executive Director Amanda Meeker.

The first section of the exhibit explores how the methods of voting have changed since California’s admission to the U.S. in 1850. The state’s earliest elections were conducted by voice vote or by casting party tickets, both of which lacked privacy and were subject to fraud. Gradually, innovations were made to improve efficiency, honesty, confidentiality and accessibility, reflected by artifacts such as a glass ballot box patented in 1884, a lever voting machine from the 1910s, punch card ballots introduced in the 1960s and a prototype of what computer-based voting machines of the future may look like.

The exhibit next chronicles the ongoing struggle to give more people a larger voice in the election process, along with historic elections that continue to influence California today. Examples include artifacts from the 1911 election, which granted women the right to vote; introduced the initiative, referendum and recall; and instituted term limits for public officials. Other sections examine pivotal chapters of history such as the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the 26th

- Continued -

"Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" opens May 17 at the California Museum

Amendment lowering the voting age to 18 in 1972, Proposition 13 reducing property taxes in 1978 and the gubernatorial recall electing former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2003.

The exhibit's artifacts on loan from the California State Archives, California State Library, California State Parks, California State University Sacramento and private collectors cover over a century of tactics used to earn Californians' votes. Highlights include rare memorabilia from 19th century torchlight parades, souvenirs from "whistle stop" candidate train tours, ads created by Campaigns, Inc., America's first political consulting firm established in California in the 1930s, and much more. In addition, interactive stations allow visitors opportunities to register to vote, to "vote" on which issues matter most to them in this election season and to discover which presidential candidate best matches their views.

Continuing through November 13, 2016 in the Museum's Maria Shriver Gallery, "Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" also features related public programming including a free reception with advance registration on Thurs., May 26 and the California State Archives' accompanying exhibit "Campaigns, Inc.: Government by Whitaker and Baxter" open May 17-Dec. 30, 2016. For more information and a list of related events, visit californiamuseum.org/voting-california.

RELATED PROGRAMMING:

"Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" Reception

Thurs., May 26, 2016 · 5:30-7:30 pm

Free reception with advance registration for "Power of the People: Voting In California, 1850-2016" hosted by the Museum in partnership with Secretary of State Alex Padilla and the California State Archives. Festivities include admission to "Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" plus all current exhibits, complimentary refreshments from Mayahuel and more. Event sponsored by The California Endowment and limited to a maximum of 250 attendees. For more information or to register, visit californiamuseum.org/voting-reception.

Primary Election Day at the California Museum

Tues., June 7, 2016 · 10:00 am-4:30 pm

Free admission to "Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" for all visitors plus free exhibit poster for first 50 visitors. For more information, visit californiamuseum.org/primary-day.

"Insight with Beth Ruyak" Live at the California Museum

Thurs., Aug. 18, 2016 · 6:00-8:00 pm

Free event featuring a panel discussion of key issues on the November 8 ballot broadcast live on Capital Public Radio's "Insight with Beth Ruyak" plus admission to "Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" for all attendees. For more information or to register beginning June 1, visit californiamuseum.org/insight-live.

Voter Registration Day at the California Museum

Tues., Sept. 27, 2016 · 10:00 am-4:30 pm

Free admission to "Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" for all visitors plus free exhibit poster for first 50 visitors. For more information, visit californiamuseum.org/voter-reg-day.

Election Day at the California Museum

Tues., Nov. 8, 2016 · 10:00 am-4:30 pm

Free admission to "Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" for all visitors plus free exhibit poster for first 50 visitors. For more information, visit californiamuseum.org/election-day.

"Power of the People: Voting in California, 1850-2016" opens May 17 at the California Museum

ABOUT CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

A self-supporting 501(c)3 non-profit, the California Museum — home of the California Hall of Fame — engages, educates and enlightens people about California's rich history and unique contributions to the world through ideas, innovation, the arts and culture. Through interactive, innovative exhibits and programs, the Museum inspires visitors to make their own mark on history. Open Tues.-Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sun.: 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; closed Monday. Admission: adults \$9.00; college students & seniors \$7.50 with valid ID; youth 6-17: \$7.00; children 5 and under free with paid adult admission. For more information, visit californiamuseum.org.

###

Exhibit press kit available for download at:

<http://www.californiamuseum.org/press-kit/voting-california>

Press images available for download at:

<http://www.californiamuseum.org/photo-gallery/voting-california>

Interviews & exhibit tours available by request submitted via:

<http://www.californiamuseum.org/media-inquiries>

For questions or additional assistance, please contact:
Brenna Hamilton, Communications & Marketing Director
Phone: (916) 651-0934

Email: bhamilton@californiamuseum.org