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For Immediate Release

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**California Humanities Announces
New Initiative: *California on the Ballot***

(Oakland, CA) — California Humanities is pleased to introduce a new statewide initiative, California on the Ballot, a series of public programs and activities to illuminate and analyze the past, present, and future of electoral engagement in California.

According to California Humanities President and CEO Julie Fry, “This important new initiative provides an opportunity for those in California and beyond to learn more about our state’s electoral history, and to share ideas about what it means to strengthen our democracy in a minority-majority state.”

The series of free California on the Ballot programs will take place through April 2021 and be conducted virtually unless public health directives change to make socially distanced in-person programs possible. California Humanities launched the initiative with its first event, “CA on the Ballot: What’s the Deal with Direct Democracy?” a panel discussion about the history and context of California’s use of ballot initiatives with experts and scholars on the subject, moderated by KQED Senior Editor Rachael Myrow.

This important area of focus is supported by the “Why it Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation” initiative, administered by the Federation of State Humanities Councils and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Federation of State Humanities Councils recently announced this Mellon Foundation award of \$1.96 million to support programs in 43 US states and territories throughout the course of the initiative, including California. This national initiative will explore civic participation as it relates to electoral engagement in a multivocal democracy.

The “Why It Matters” national initiative provides support to humanities programs conducted by the US state and territorial humanities councils to engage the public in collaborative, accessible, and thought-provoking dialogues on the importance of electoral and civic participation.

About California Humanities:

California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect people to each other in order to help strengthen California. California Humanities has provided grants and programs across the state since 1975. To learn more, visit calhum.org, or like and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

About the Federation of State Humanities Councils:

Founded in 1977, the Federation of State Humanities Councils is the national member association of the US state and jurisdictional humanities councils. Our purpose is to provide leadership, advocacy, and information to help members advance programs that engage millions of citizens across diverse populations in community and civic life.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation:

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

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