

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2015

Media Contacts:

Yael Eytan
215.923.5978
773.551.6956 (c)
yeytan@nmajh.org

Ilana Blumenthal
215.391.4662
267.294.8425 (c)
iblumenthal@nmajh.org

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN TO OFFER

FREE FEBRUARY AT NMAJH

Free admission offered throughout February in celebration of loan extension for historic George Washington letter promising religious freedom

The National Museum of American Jewish History is pleased to announce that it will be offering **free admission to all visitors throughout the month of February**. Due to the support of an anonymous donor, the Museum is able to offer this benefit in celebration of a **seven-year loan extension for the iconic 1790 letter from George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island**. In the letter, to which NMAJH has been home for the past three years, the nation's first president proclaims "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance," underscoring the new nation's commitment to religious liberty and equality for people of *all* faiths.

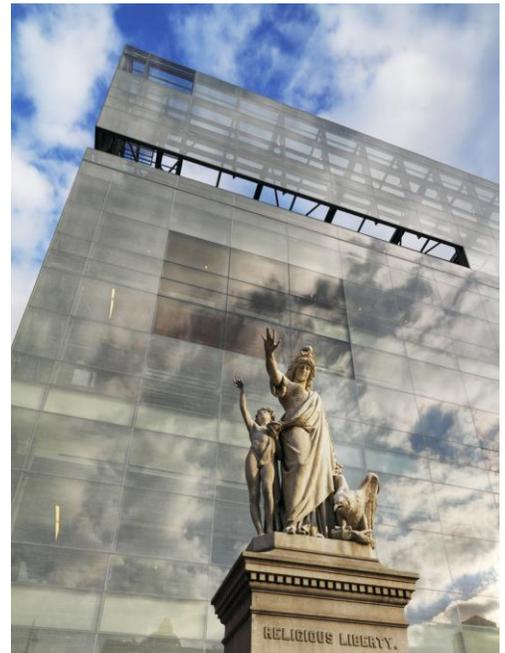
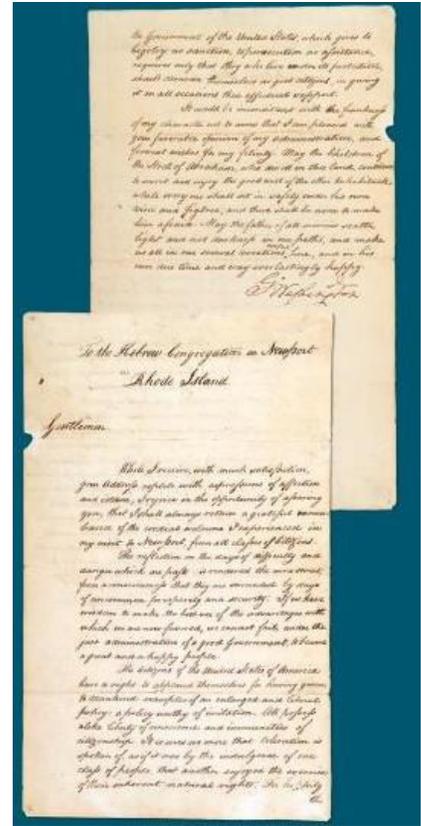


Photo by Jeff Goldberg/Esto

“We are happy to further the noble work of your worthy institution and our most fruitful partnership,” says Richard Morgenstern, lender, of extending the loan to the Museum.

Ivy Barsky, CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of NMAJH, says “We were so proud to be chosen as the custodians and interpreters of this historic document and we are thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to share it with the public for seven more years. In making the month of February free to all visitors, we celebrate the right to religious freedom while making this historic, rarely displayed letter accessible to a wider audience.”

In addition to being able to see the George Washington letter, *Free February at NMAJH* will offer visitors complimentary access to the Museum’s core exhibition highlighting more than 360-years of Jewish life in America, themed tours, and two special installations, ***Liat Segal: Scattered Light*** and ***’Twas the Night Before Hanukkah***.



Courtesy of the Morris Morgenstern Foundation

In ***Scattered Light***, Israeli artist Liat Segal gives new life to Washington’s celebrated 1790 letter. The high-tech work, which was commissioned by the Museum and represents Segal’s US debut, weaves together key phrases from Washington’s letter with the reflections of Museum visitors collected from the Museum’s *It’s Your Story* recording booths. Both Washington’s words and the contemporary commentary speak to the significance of religious freedom and to the continuing role all citizens play in its preservation.

Generous support provided by Shirley and Albert H. Small, Jane and Stuart Weitzman, and the Consulate General of Israel to the Mid-Atlantic Region.

’Twas the Night Before Hanukkah explores the history of Hanukkah and Christmas music and the musicians, artists, and songwriters who wrote and performed them. The

installation features well-known artists such as Irving Berlin, Benny Goodman, Bob Dylan, the Ramones, and Lou Reed.

'Twas the Night Before Hanukkah is a collaboration between the National Museum of American Jewish History and the Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation.

As in prior years, **the Museum will also be open and free on Presidents Day, Monday, February 16.** Visitors on this special day will be treated to greetings from an actor portraying George Washington, interactive tours highlighting the theme of religious freedom (to be offered in English, Russian, Spanish, and Hebrew), and family activities. They will also have the opportunity to write their own letters about freedom with a quill pen.

The Museum Café will help ward off the cold with hot chocolate and grilled cheese throughout the month.

###

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. 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. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.