

CONSTITUTION USA

**PBS TO AIR “CONSTITUTION USA with PETER SAGAL” ON TUESDAYS,
PREMIERING MAY 7 AT 9PM**

**Popular NPR Host Hits the Road on Motorcycle to
Scrutinize America’s Most Revered — and Misunderstood — Document**

(MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, MN) – January 14, 2013 – **CONSTITUTION USA with Peter Sagal** takes viewers on a fast-paced, surprising journey across the nation to examine the 4,418 words — and 27 amendments — that made America. The series coincides with the 225th anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution.

For the month-long series, premiering **Tuesday, May 7, 9:00-10:00 p.m. ET**, Sagal, host of NPR’s popular *Wait Wait... Don’t Tell Me!*, travels cross-country — from Tyler, Texas, to Missoula, Montana; from Cranston, Rhode Island, to Berkeley, California — on a customized red, white and blue Harley-Davidson to find out what the Constitution means in the 21st century, how it unites us as a nation and how it has nearly torn us apart. Sagal talks with ordinary Americans who are struggling with issues of affirmative action, same-sex marriage, voting rights, the role of government and equal protection.

“There is one thing that sets us apart from most other nations in the world and that is our Constitution,” says Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, whom Sagal interviews for **CONSTITUTION USA**. “It serves every American every day. No citizen can be denied due process of law or equal protection under our laws. We are truly blessed.”

At a time when polls indicate that only 38 percent of Americans can name all three branches of U.S. government (2011 survey by The Annenberg Public Policy Center), **CONSTITUTION USA** sets out to illuminate, with style and humor, this remarkably misunderstood document. **CONSTITUTION USA** uses an innovative visual approach, combining top-line animation and graphics with archival footage from television and movies to bring to life both the history and the actual text of the Constitution.

“If you really stop and think about it, the Constitution is all around us all the time” says Sagal. “And though many of us don’t really understand the document, that has never stopped us from arguing about what it means.”

“Tackling a topic as important as the Constitution, and doing it in a way that is not only educational, but entertaining as well, is the essence of what PBS stands for,” says Beth Hoppe, Chief Programming Executive and General Manager, General Audience Programming, PBS. “And timing the series to coincide with the anniversary of an important milestone in U.S. history is another way we demonstrate value as America’s largest classroom. At any moment, anyone can tune in to a local PBS station and find relevant content that in some way relates to what’s going on in the world.”

“Public broadcasting stations and producers owe their existence, in large part, to the guarantee of freedom of expression contained in the First Amendment to the Constitution,” said Patricia Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). “Through public broadcasting, Americans are informed, educated and entertained; our democracy and civil society strengthened. We are proud to support **CONSTITUTION USA**, which offers a unique and contemporary perspective on how the Constitution, an important part of our shared history, continues to guide us in addressing the issues and challenges we face today.”

Featuring a powerful social media component and innovative educational partnerships with The National Constitution Center, iCivics and PBS NEWSHOUR, **CONSTITUTION USA** will reach citizens across a variety of platforms, inviting them to connect around our shared political legacy.

CONSTITUTION USA, a production of *tpt* National Productions in association with Insignia Films, is directed by Stephen Ives; written by Jaime Bernanke with Peter Sagal; produced by Amanda Pollak; and executive produced by Catherine Allan.

Funding for **CONSTITUTION USA** is provided by U.S. Bank Wealth Management, Anne Ray Charitable Trust, the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, Baker & McKenzie LLP, Dorsey & Whitney LLP, Shearman & Sterling LLP, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and and public television viewers.

Viewers can follow **CONSTITUTION USA** online at www.pbs.org/constitutionUSA and on the following social platforms:

<http://pbsconstitution.tumblr.com/>

@PBS

www.facebook.com/pbs

About *tpt* National Productions

TPT National Productions is the national production division of Twin Cities Public Television (*tpt*), the PBS affiliate for Minneapolis/St. Paul, and is a significant content producer for the public television system. In addition to crafting award-winning series, documentaries and specials, *tpt* has created a major, highly lauded body of work on the history of America’s founding era, including the Peabody Award-winning series *LIBERTY! The American Revolution* and *Benjamin Franklin* (Primetime Emmy). Other notable *tpt* productions include *The Forgetting: A Portrait of Alzheimer’s*; *Depression: Out of the Shadows*; the children’s science series *SciGirls*; and most recently, *Slavery by Another Name*, an official selection of the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

About Insignia Films

For more than 20 years, Insignia Films has been creating documentaries that explore America’s past, engage with its present, and illuminate who we are as a nation and what we believe. Founded in 1988 by Stephen Ives, and joined in 2001 by Amanda Pollak, Insignia Films has

earned a particular reputation as one of the country's foremost producers of documentaries and television series. The company has made films for HBO, an episode of *Faces of America* with Henry Louis Gates, and independent feature documentaries.

Dedicated to dynamic storytelling that entertains and inspires even as it informs, Insignia Films has produced some of the most-watched films in PBS history, including the landmark series *The West*, which was seen by more than 38 million people nationwide, as well as nine films for the acclaimed PBS series *American Experience*. Insignia's work has been honored with recognition from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the Directors and Writers Guilds of America, and film festivals nationwide.

About PBS

[PBS](#), with its nearly 360 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches 124 million people through television and 20 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS' premier children's TV programming and its website [pbskids.org](#), are parents' and teachers' most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](#), one of the leading dot-org websites on the Internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our apps for mobile devices. Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](#) or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](#).

About CPB

[CPB](#) is a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967 and steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operation of nearly 1,300 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide, and is the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services.

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Contact: Rubenstein Communications, Inc.
Jenny Tartikoff JTartikoff@rubenstein.com / 212-843-8496
Robert Pini RPini@rubenstein.com / 212-843-8045

Twin Cities Public Television
Elle Krause-Lyons ekrausel Lyons@tpt.org / 651-229-1491

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