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Contact: Matt Smyth, 434-243-8466

Alito, Ferraro, Dole, Schieffer to Highlight National Constitutional Convention October 19th in Washington, D.C.

Center for Politics Hosts Groundbreaking Examination of America's Governing Document

CHARLOTTESVILLE – The Center for Politics will hold a day-long **National Constitutional Convention** on Friday, October 19, 2007 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C. Moderated by CBS News' **Bob Schieffer**, the event will feature a keynote address by Supreme Court Justice **Samuel Alito** and special remarks by Former Vice Presidential nominee **Geraldine Ferraro** and Former Senator **Bob Dole**, in addition to three panel discussions, periods of question & answer and real-time audience voting on proposed reforms (see full schedule below).

The event is free and open to the public, with advance registration required at <http://www.amoreperfectconstitution.com>. Members of the media are invited to attend, and should register on line and then contact Matt Smyth at the Center for Politics (434-243-8466). Wireless internet will be available inside the auditorium; electrical outlets will be available at specified locations. Please see special press policy for Justice Alito below.

The convention, which will include three panel discussions in addition to the keynote address and special remarks, will offer a wide range of topics for discussion such as presidential and congressional election reform, checking the powers of government and the question, **“Should there be another Constitutional Convention?”** All in attendance will have the opportunity to vote on each panel topic and render a tentative decision on the major reforms giving this event the feel of a constitutional convention.

The goal of the **National Constitutional Convention** is not to promote one possible reform over another, but rather to spur a grand, national discussion on the Constitution of the United States and whether the cornerstone of our republic could or should be a means of revitalizing civic and political engagement in America, curtailing apathy and renewing confidence in American politics and government.

Center for Politics founder and director Professor **Larry J. Sabato** added, “We’re asking all Americans to set aside their own political loyalties, to look past the current ‘values’ debates and hot-button issues and to consider this very real possibility: that the failure of the nation to update the Constitution and the structure of government it originally bequeathed to us is at the root of our current political dysfunction.”

In his new book, *A More Perfect Constitution*, Sabato provides twenty-three suggestions to update and improve the U.S. Constitution for future generations. The idea behind the book is to spark a national discussion of constitutional reform and generate a renewed public interest in the mechanisms of American government. By no means are the proposals contained in the book intended to be the end of the debate – rather the beginning of a generation-long look at a practical revision of a governing document that the Framers themselves intended to be updated on a regular basis. The **National Constitutional Convention** has been convened as a first step in this process. For more information and to join the discussion, visit www.amoreperfectconstitution.com.

SPECIAL PRESS POLICY FOR JUSTICE SAMUEL ALITO: According to stipulations from the office of Justice Alito, no audio or video recording will be permitted during his keynote address. Still photographs are permitted, and members of the media covering the event may take notes during his speech.

National Constitutional Convention

Friday, October 19, 2007

Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium

1301 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, D.C.

9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Moderator for all three panels: Bob Schieffer from CBS's "Face the Nation"

9:30 a.m. – Doors open (metal detectors and security check)

10:00 to 10:05 a.m. – Opening remarks: **Larry J. Sabato**

10:05 to 10:15 a.m. – Liberty School students' performance

10:15 a.m. – Larry J. Sabato introduces Geraldine Ferraro

10:20 to 10:40 a.m. – Opening speaker: **Geraldine Ferraro**

10:40am to 12:00 p.m. – Panel I: Presidential and Congressional Election Reform (time includes intros and audience Q&A)

Panelists: **Rob Bishop**, U.S. Congressman, Utah-01
Donna Brazile, Brazile & Associates
Paul Freedman, Professor, University of Virginia
Rich Lowry, *National Review* Editor
Lowell Weicker, former Governor of Connecticut

12:00 to 12:40 p.m. – Lunch (boxed lunches to be served at the Mellon)

12:40 to 2:05 p.m. – Panel II: Checking the Powers of Government (time includes intros and audience Q&A)

Panelists: **Fred Barnes**, *The Weekly Standard* Executive Editor
Catherine Crier, Crier Communications Inc.
Louis Fisher, Library of Congress
Joe Lockhart, The Glover Park Group
Tommy Thompson, former HHS Secretary
Sarah Weddington, The Weddington Center

2:15 p.m. – Larry J. Sabato introduces Justice Samuel Alito

2:20 to 2:50 p.m. – Keynote address: Supreme Court Justice **Samuel Alito**

3:00 to 4:25 p.m. – Panel III: Should There be Another Constitutional Convention? (time includes intros and audience Q&A)

Panelists: **Walter Dellinger**, Former U.S. Solicitor General
Garrett Epps, Professor, U. of Oregon Law School
Eric Lane, Professor, Hofstra Law School
Sandy Levinson, Professor, U. of Texas Law School
Nadine Strossen, ACLU President
Michael Steele, GOPAC Chairman

4:30 to 4:50 p.m. – CFP's Youth Leadership Initiative presentation, including results of our national Youth Mock Constitutional Convention

4:55 p.m. – Larry J. Sabato introduces Senator Bob Dole

5:00 to 5:25 p.m. – Closing speaker: Senator **Bob Dole**

5:25 p.m. – Closing remarks: Larry J. Sabato

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