

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

America 250

**NOBEL LAUREATES, PULITZER WINNERS, GLOBAL LEADERS TO CONVENE
IN PHILADELPHIA TO EXAMINE DEMOCRACY AND THE DECLARATION**

*Benjamin Franklin's American Philosophical Society Hosts High-Profile
Three-Day Meeting; Open to Press*

PRESS PHOTOS

Credit: American Philosophical Society

PHILADELPHIA (April 6, 2026) – As the United States marks its 250th anniversary, **350 of the world's leading thinkers and scholars** will convene in Philadelphia's historic district to debate and reflect on the **Declaration of Independence** and the **state of democracy**.

The American Philosophical Society's (APS) [April 2026 Meeting](#), which runs April 22 to 24, will bring together a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, Pulitzer Prize-winning historians and biographers, a leading scholar of American civic life, senior heads of major scientific academies, prominent constitutional thinkers, and Philadelphia leaders grappling with how the Revolution is interpreted today.

Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743 and located **next to Independence Hall**, the APS is the nation's oldest learned society. Its members gather twice each year to share research, elect new members, and discuss major questions in public life, science, and the humanities.

Members of the press are invited to attend in-person or via a [public livestream](#).

"This April Meeting will bring together leaders across many different fields to explore where we are as a nation and what our future may look like," **said Dr. Patrick Spero, CEO, APS**. "I cannot think of a timelier meeting or a more pressing issue for us today than the health of this experiment in democracy we launched 250 years ago."

Program Highlights

- Release of a new AI-assisted conversation from The Napolitan Institute and Jigsaw (a Google Incubator) on the American ideals of Freedom and Equality and what it means to be an American today. The Napolitan Institute will also present a 'Declaration of American Ideals,' derived from the conversation
- Presentation of the Congressionally authorized Thomas Jefferson Medal to sociologist Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*
- Debut of a contemporary Declaration of Independence art piece by artist and APS member Johanna Drucker, inspired by the Society's collection of historic Declarations
 - A highlight of APS's new [These Truths: The Declarations of Independence](#) exhibition, open April 10 through January 3

- Conversation on the meaning of the Declaration featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning historians Annette Gordon-Reed and David Blight, Lincoln Prize winner Allen Guelzo, and historian Lori Ginzburg
- Discussion on the future of knowledge with Nobel laureate and Royal Society President Paul Nurse; Rosaura Ruiz Cutiérrez, the first woman to lead the Mexican Academy of Sciences and now a cabinet official; James Liao of Academia Sinica; and Sudip Parikh of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science
- Debate on the future of the Constitution featuring political scientist Rogers Smith and legal scholar John Yoo
- Presentation of the Phillips Prize in Jurisprudence to Judge Guido Calabresi of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- Conversation on interpreting the American Revolution in the 21st century with Museum of the American Revolution President and CEO Scott Stephenson and former Independence National Historical Park Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod

APS History

Founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin and other Enlightenment-era thinkers, the American Philosophical Society has long played a role in the intellectual life of the United States. Four of the **five members of the Declaration of Independence drafting committee belonged to the Society**, and **15 APS members signed the Declaration**. Located next to Independence Hall, APS continues to convene leading scholars, scientists, and professionals from around the world.

APS members include Nobel Laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, Academy Award winners, leaders in public life, including Supreme Court justices, former governors and high-ranking officials, and pioneering entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

APS meets twice each year, in April and November, in Philadelphia. The Society has approximately 850 elected members, with about 30 new members elected annually across disciplines. **Election to the Society is considered one of the highest honors one can achieve in the pursuit of knowledge.**

[Learn more.](#)

ABOUT THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States, was founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin for the purpose of “promoting useful knowledge.” The APS sustains this mission today by engaging leading scholars, scientists, and professionals through elected membership and fellowship, supporting research and discovery, and through its research library. The APS continues to reflect the founders’ spirit of inquiry, provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas, and convey the conviction that intellectual inquiry and critical thought are inherently in the best interest of the public. In 2001, the APS opened its Museum gallery in Philosophical Hall, the Society’s home since 1789. The Museum changes annually to highlight objects from its collection.

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