



*What the  
Constitution  
Means  
to Me*

WRITTEN BY  
**HEIDI  
SCHRECK**

DIRECTED BY  
**HELEN  
YOUNG**



**Timeline**  
Theatre Company

**BACKSTORY** YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS



Dear Friends,

In the fall of 2018, the nation (and beyond) was gripped by the Supreme Court confirmation hearings of Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Days of testimony stretched into a weeks-long process, as new allegations regarding personal conduct emerged. A passionate debate brewed with each passing day about how laws might be interpreted in a newly drawn court, including implications for the future of *Roe v. Wade*, upholding civil liberties, and numerous other politically charged topics.

Everywhere you turned, it seemed, the Constitution was being discussed.

Concurrently, a new play was opening Off-Broadway at the inestimable New York Theatre Workshop.

Written by Heidi Schreck, this wholly original piece of theatre wasn't quite a one-woman show, nor was it quite like any other traditional play. Part personal memory. Part extemporaneous debate. Part history lesson and cautionary tale. And completely hilarious, vulnerable, haunting, witty, and well-researched.

It was, of course, *What The Constitution Means To Me*, and it became instantly buzz-worthy—a must-see sensation.

While not written in direct response to what was then transpiring in Washington, D.C. (Schreck had been developing it for years prior), she was undoubtedly speaking to the moment in ways that theatre isn't always nimble or prescient enough to do.

And with its direct address to the audience and off-the-cuff nature, the energy within the theatre took on a sense of shared immediacy, becoming cathartic, empowering, and—as great theatre can so uniquely do—communal.

Soon, the confines of that intimate venue wasn't sufficient. A Broadway transfer followed, as did recognition from the Pulitzer Prize committee, as well as a Tony Award nomination. Then a national tour (regrettably beset by the pandemic), and a filmed, streamed version that came as a balm during lockdown for a weary nation struggling through surreal times, longing for the connection and discourse that Heidi so uniquely provided.

And now, here we are. In a new moment, 2023.

Much has changed since we first encountered this play back in the fall of 2018. And some of the cautionary tales have turned into new realities with notable consequences. Yet in the light of our current moment, Heidi's humanity and clarion call for engagement among all generations still speaks with an urgent resonance.

Following years of admiration for this play, and an impassioned pursuit to bring it to our stage, TimeLine is honored and elated to create the first Chicago-based production of *What the Constitution Means to Me*, under the direction of Helen Young and featuring some of our city's finest artists. They bring their own perspectives about what our nation's seminal, founding document means to them.

Although it was written more than 200 years ago, we're still parsing and grappling with this Constitution, in all its potency and imperfection. Often today, it's viewed only through the lens of our own ideologies and convictions, framed by a bitterly divided electorate often unable to consider points other their own.

Guided by Heidi's voice, we're grateful that you've joined us to engage—as we must—as we the people strive and struggle onward to form a more perfect Union.

Best,

## THE PLAYWRIGHT

HEIDI SCHRECK AND WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME

### "It's a very personal love story about a teenage girl's bad romance with the Constitution."

—Heidi Schreck, speaking with Stephen Colbert

Heidi Schreck is a writer and performer living in Brooklyn. In addition to *What the Constitution Means to Me*, Schreck's plays include *Creature*, *There Are No More Big Secrets*, *The Consultant* and *Grand Concourse*. Screenwriting credits include *I Love Dick*, *Billions*, and *Nurse Jackie*. As an actor and writer, she is the recipient of three Obie Awards, a Drama Desk Award, and a Theatre World Award, as well as the Horton Foote Playwriting Award and the Hull-Warriner Award from the Dramatists Guild. Schreck was awarded *Smithsonian* magazine's 2019 American Ingenuity Award for her work in the Performing Arts.



Heidi Schreck in the Broadway production. (Joan Marcus)

*What the Constitution Means to Me* debuted at New York Theatre Workshop in 2018 and transferred to Broadway's Helen Hayes Theater for an extended, sold-out run in 2019. It was

nominated for two Tony Awards and a Pulitzer Prize. It had subsequent sold-out runs at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as well as at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, where Maria Dizzia took over the leading role, followed by a tour in which she and Cassie Beck starred. That tour included short runs at Broadway In Chicago's Broadway Playhouse in 2020 and 2021, both affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A filmed version of *What the Constitution Means to Me*, starring Schreck, premiered in October 2020 on Amazon Prime Video.

In 2022, Schreck performed a one-night benefit for the National Network of Abortion Funds, after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and just days after the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, she said, "I felt so depressed and sad [but] I have these two kids [twin daughters] for whom I have to keep trying. I have this show that makes a personal case for why bodily autonomy is one of our fundamental freedoms, why it matters, why it can crush someone's life if they don't have it."

## THE TIMELINE: THE CONSTITUTION

**1787** The U.S. Constitution is drafted in Philadelphia.

**1791** The first 10 amendments to the Constitution, known as the "Bill of Rights," are ratified. They enumerate many different individual rights (free speech, assembly, due process, etc.). The Ninth Amendment adds, "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people."

**1803** In *Marbury v. Madison*, the Supreme Court holds that it is the final arbiter of what the Constitution means.

**1848** New York passes the Married Women's Property Act, significantly altering the law regarding the property rights granted to married women.

**1857** In what will become widely considered among the worst decisions in Supreme Court history, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* holds that people of African descent are not citizens of the United States under the Constitution.

**1865** The Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery in the United States and gives Congress power to enforce that abolition. The amendment does permit "slavery or involuntary servitude" as punishment for a crime.

**1868** The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified. Section One provides for birthright citizenship and bars states from abridging citizens' "privileges or immunities" of citizenship. It also bans states from abridging all people's rights to Due Process and Equal Protection of the laws. To the dismay of advocates for women's rights, Section Three threatens that states that bar otherwise eligible men from voting would lose representation in Congress. The Constitution had not previously associated voting with men.



The U.S. Constitution was drafted as a set of restrictions on what the newly established federal government could do. These restrictions reflect drafters' concerns about the remembered abuses of power in England, the experience with local governance in the colonies, the reaction to English overreach from afar, and the defects of the Articles of Confederation.

Trying to avoid both the tyranny of concentrated power and the tyranny of majority rule, the drafters of the U.S. Constitution were skeptical of a powerful federal government that might run roughshod over local governance. Hence, much of the Constitution is written in negative language, framed as a limit on government authority. (For example, the First Amendment doesn't guarantee an affirmative right to free speech, it limits how the government can punish you for speech.)

The U.S. Constitution is distinct from other law. Because it was ratified through constitutional conventions, it has more authority than regular legislation, and it is also harder to change. As an additional limit, Article VI says that the Constitution itself is supreme—so any laws that violate the Constitution are invalid.

When people claim that certain laws are unconstitutional (something that happens all the time), who decides? The U.S. Supreme Court said in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) that it is the federal courts' role "to say what the law is." The Supreme Court, which is the last stop for judicial

**Much of the Constitution is written in negative language, framed as a limit on government authority.**



*Signing of the Constitution in 1787. Painting by Junius Brutus Stearns, 1856. (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)*

appeals, has thus assumed the task of being the final word on what the Constitution means. If the Supreme Court finds that a law conflicts with the Constitution, the law is declared unconstitutional and is no longer valid.

To decide whether a law is constitutional, judges must interpret the relatively spare constitutional text. For example, many modern controversies (contraception, abortion, marriage) are centered in a single clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that bars government from depriving someone of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

In trying to figure out what "liberty" means (does it cover contraception? abortion? the ability to have sex with another consenting adult?) and what kind of process is due, judges look not only at the text of the Constitution but at all of the previous cases interpreting that constitutional provision. Then they figure out how and whether the constitutional clause at issue applies in the specific dispute before them. Judges are bound by previous decisions, which under the principle of stare decisis they treat as precedent—unless they decide not to be, and explain why they're going a different way.

It's up to judges to decide how to read this language. Chief Justice John Marshall suggested in *McCulloch v. Maryland* that perhaps we should read it broadly to cover new circumstances, as "we must never forget that it is a Constitution we are expounding." Judging is an act of interpretation, whatever some may say, that is exercised by federal judges appointed for life.

## THE AMENDMENT

### LIBERTY, EQUAL PROTECTION, DUE PROCESS, AND THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

Heidi Schreck narrates aspects of her life story while explaining the four parts of Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment: birthright citizenship, privileges or immunities, due process, and equal protection. But she struggles to make a personal connection, as none of these parts—magic as they may seem—mention women or the issues of reproductive freedom and domestic violence that are at the heart of the play.



*Engraving published on the February 18, 1865 cover of Harper's Weekly, depicting the scene in the House of Representatives after passage of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery.*

Congress debated the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866, immediately after the Civil War ended. Advocates of the amendment were most concerned with protecting the rights of formerly enslaved people, and with the problem of racial subordination. They wanted to put limits on the states and empower the federal government to step in when people's rights were violated.

But the drafters wrote Section One in sweeping terms that did not explicitly mention race. Some congressmen wondered at the time whether the amendment implied that women were now entitled to the same rights as men. Some supporters of the amendment said they intended no such thing.

As the amendment went out to the states for ratification, state governments were in the midst of passing a wave of legislation criminalizing abortion. The movement was led by organized physicians, many of whom worried that elite white women were not having enough babies, or that the population of Catholic immigrants, with their large families, would soon overtake white Protestants. Women were not permitted to vote or hold office at the time. As the dissenters in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* recently reminded us, "people" did not ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Men did."

**1869** The Fifteenth Amendment is ratified, barring disenfranchisement based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Leading white women suffragists including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony call on Americans to reject this amendment because it doesn't include women. They go on to lobby for a Sixteenth Amendment to bar disenfranchisement based on sex.

**1850s to 1880s** A Massachusetts obstetrician, Horatio Storer, persuades the American Medical Association to lead a campaign to criminalize abortion in the states. Several states adopt laws that make it a crime to provide an abortion; most laws contain exceptions for when the life or health of the pregnant person is at risk.

**1873** Congress passes the Comstock Act, which criminalizes mailing or selling pornography and materials associated with birth control and abortion. The law will be repeatedly upheld and even strengthened by courts, and states will pass their own "mini" Comstock Acts.

In *Bradwell v. Illinois*, the Supreme Court holds that it's not unconstitutional for a state to bar women from the practice of law.

**1882** The Chinese Exclusion Act bars almost all immigration from China.

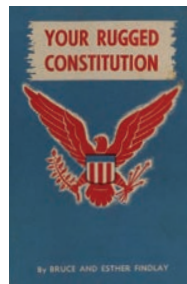
**1898** In *Williams v. Mississippi*, the Supreme Court upholds the Mississippi Constitution of 1890, which severely restricts voting rights, particularly for Black men. From the 1890s to the 1960s, Black men and other people of color will be regularly barred from exercising their right to vote.

**1915** In *Mackenzie v. Hare*, the Supreme Court holds that it is not unconstitutional for Congress to strip women of U.S. citizenship if they marry a citizen of another country.

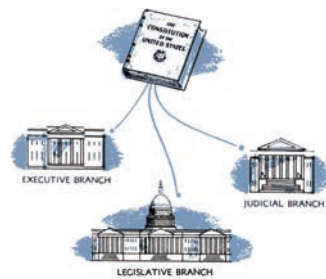
For almost a century after ratification in 1868, few argued that the Fourteenth Amendment's sweeping protections had anything to do with sex or gender. Finally, in the late 1960s—after activists, lawyers, and judges revitalized the amendment's protections against racial discrimination—people began to envision using the amendment to protect women against sex-based subordination, including challenges associated with pregnancy and childbearing.

From the 1970s to the present, the Court has increasingly viewed the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as a barrier to various forms of sex-based discrimination, using it to invalidate laws that discriminated against women, against men, and against same-sex couples.

The Court has looked to the Due Process Clause as the site of protections for bodily autonomy. In the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), some justices argued that restrictions on married couples' access to birth control interfered with the "liberty" promised in the amendment's Due Process Clause. They said the Constitution promised people a "zone of privacy" in which the state could



Cover of *Your Rugged Constitution*, the Cold War-era guide Heidi Schreck used to prepare for the American Legion oratory contests (left); and an illustration from the guide by Bruce and Esther Findlay, Stanford University Press, 1950.



not interfere without good reason. In *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the Court extended that argument, holding that state restrictions on abortion, particularly in the first trimester, infringed on that zone of privacy.

Many justices, however, have opposed these advances in human rights and have pushed to interpret the Due Process Clause narrowly. The play mentions *Gonzales v. Castle Rock*, a domestic violence case in which the Court held that a survivor of domestic violence had no constitutional claim when the police declined to enforce a restraining order she had obtained.

More recently, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, a five-justice majority (including three justices appointed by President Donald Trump), overturned *Roe v. Wade*. The majority held that the Court in 1973 had read the Due Process Clause's promises too broadly; it cited the 19th-century movement to criminalize abortion as evidence that "the right to abortion is not deeply rooted in the Nation's history and traditions."

The Supreme Court as composed October 2020 to June 2022, and which decided *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* (pictured starting front row, from left): Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr.; Associate Justice Clarence Thomas; Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.; Associate Justice Stephen G. Breyer; Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor; Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh; Associate Justice Elena Kagan; Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch; and Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett. (Fred Schilling)



**1919** The Eighteenth Amendment is ratified, banning the manufacture, sale, importation and export of "intoxicating liquors" used "for beverage purposes." In 1933, Americans will decide they made a mistake and repeal this amendment.

**1920** The Nineteenth Amendment is passed. Echoing the language of the Fifteenth Amendment, it bars discrimination in voting rights based on sex. It does not, however, give all women the right to vote. In many states and across entire regions, racist policies ensure that Black women, Native American women, and Latinas, like men in their groups, cannot exercise their right to vote.

**1923** Leaders of the woman suffrage movement, including Alice Paul, draft the Equal Rights Amendment, banning discrimination based on sex. Paul's organization, the National Women's Party, continues advocating the amendment, but is controversial for largely ignoring the concerns of working class and Black women.

**1927** The Supreme Court holds in *Buck v. Bell* that it is not unconstitutional to forcibly sterilize a "feeble minded" woman.

**1942** The Supreme Court holds in *Skinner v. Oklahoma* that a specific law regarding compulsory sterilization is unconstitutional, and announces that marriage is a fundamental right protected by the Constitution.

**1954** In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court holds that racial segregation is unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

**1958** In *Kent v. Dulles*, the Supreme Court articulates a right to travel as among the liberties protected by the Constitution.

**1961** In *Hoyt v. Florida*, the Supreme Court holds that a state may require men, but not women, to participate in jury duty.

**1960s** Lawyer and activist Pauli Murray, a graduate of Howard University Law School, writes memos and articles advocating using the Equal Protection Clause to attack sex discrimination.

**1965** *Griswold v. Connecticut* is decided. Estelle Griswold, the executive director of the Planned Parenthood League of Connecticut, had challenged the state's 1879 Comstock law. In an opinion written by Justice William O. Douglas, the Court says governments can't stand in the way of married couples obtaining birth control. The text of the Constitution does not directly mention birth control or privacy within marriage, Douglas acknowledges. But courts have already acknowledged

that several amendments in the Bill of Rights have "penumbras" (or shadows) that broaden their reach beyond what the text literally says. Reading the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments in this way, Douglas leads a 7-2 majority in determining that the Constitution guarantees people a right to privacy, at least in some situations. Some justices agree with the decision, but argue that the right to privacy is located in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

**1967** Thurgood Marshall becomes the first Black Supreme Court justice.

**1969** In *Loving v. Virginia*, the Supreme Court draws on the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to say that states cannot bar interracial marriage.

**1970** California's no-fault divorce law, the first such law in the country, takes effect, making it much, much easier to get a divorce. Other states quickly follow.

**1971** The Twenty-Sixth Amendment passes. This amendment, echoing the Fifteenth and Nineteenth, says states cannot bar American citizens who are 18 years of age and older from voting, on account of age.

Inspired in part by the work of Pauli Murray, the ACLU Women's Rights Project begins a campaign to persuade the Supreme Court to use the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause to protect against sex-based discrimination. Ruth Bader Ginsburg leads the litigation. In *Reed v. Reed*, the Supreme Court holds for the first time that sex-based discrimination is unconstitutional.

**1972** In *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, the Supreme Court extends to unmarried people its view that states can't bar people from trying to obtain birth control.

**1973** The Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* holds that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is protected under the right to privacy, which it considers part of the "liberty" protected by the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause.

The Equal Rights Amendment is passed by Congress. The first section reads, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by



Before rehearsals began, dramaturg Maren Robinson (MR) sat down with our two experts, Kate Masur (KM) and Joanna Grisinger (JG)—both historians at Northwestern University—to talk a bit more about the Constitution.

This is an edited version of their very informative conversation; to read the entire interview, visit [time-linetheatre.com/constitution-lobby](http://time-linetheatre.com/constitution-lobby).

**MR:** We're so excited to have you at TimeLine! You're both teachers and have taught courses on the Constitution and various rights that roll out from it. I would love to hear about any misconceptions you encounter about the Constitution, our laws or rights, or the interplay of those things.

**KM:** People often invoke rights and believe that the original Constitution, from 1789, is the foundation of those rights. Or they look at the Bill of Rights from 1791 and say, "I know my rights are listed in the Bill of Rights, let's look at those. Those are my rights."

There's a bit of a misconception here, because in early U.S. history, the general consensus was you could only really invoke those rights against the federal government, not against the states. The framers of the Constitution feared that a strong central government might infringe on individual rights; they felt that state or local governments were not so threatening.

The idea that the U.S. government should protect people against violations by local and state officials really only entered the Constitution in the 1860s with the Reconstruction amendments. So to the extent that we believe we have certain rights that no government entity should be able to violate, that is not a late-18th-century



Constitutional scholars Joanna Grisinger (left) and Kate Masur.

idea. That is a post-Civil War idea. If you start to think about it that way, you have to do things like question the original framers—the guys with white wigs on. And you have to think about the ways that the project of ending slavery actually created rights for everyone.

**JG:** Something that is important to know is that the Constitution only applies against the government. That is, there's a doctrine of state action: almost every part of the Constitution only restricts government actors, state actors. The State of Illinois cannot interfere with your freedom of speech, but Facebook can, TimeLine Theatre can. Any sort of private institution is not subject to the Constitution's limitations. And so one of the first things to note, if you feel like your rights are being infringed upon, is to understand who's actually doing it.

Another clarification is that it's too easy to think about the Constitution as the end all and be all of the source of laws; whereas, the Constitution is a floor, not a ceiling, in most cases. It's not a cap on the things government can do.

There's all manner of Federal and State laws that certainly limit what Facebook can do, that limit what TimeLine Theatre can do, that limit what we, as instructors at a private university, can do, etc., that have little relationship to the Constitution.

And so too much of a focus on the Constitution tends to affect our imagination, both of what else might be out there, and what else might be possible, because it is a pretty brief document. But there's a lot of other laws out there.

**MR:** Early in her life, Heidi has a real, genuine affection for the Constitution. But then critique comes in as her character ages. How do feelings of critique and appreciation jostle for the two of you?

**JG:** The law, Constitution, the Supreme Court decisions, they're just words that have to be given meaning. So every generation, every new decision, is an opportunity for courts to give meaning to legal language, and for people to press before the Supreme Court different ideas of what this language can mean. And so there's real opportunity there, and a lot of the play is about not just the Constitution itself, but the possibility of giving these words new and different meaning.

That said, it's true that the words and the decisions of straight white men, and their interpretations of the Constitution across time, and the way they've read previous decisions, and their inability to see people of color, or white women, or LGBTQ folk, or others as fully rights-bearing individuals who deserve the same kind of protection, continue to bind us today.

**MR:** I love what you've both said about the disconnect between what people think their rights are, and what they actually are. One concept in the play is the idea of affirmative rights and negative rights. Could you share a definition of those?

**KM:** If we think about the promises of rights in the Constitution, those rights are mostly framed in negative terms. That is—rights are discussed as what the state cannot do to you rather than what you have a right to. For instance, the State cannot directly, in most cases, tell you that you can't talk about certain things; the State cannot deprive you of certain kinds of due process. It's basically promising an individual person protection against certain kinds of incursions or coercions by the State.

But it's not saying you affirmatively have a right—let's say, to something like health care, or to a basic standard of living, or to terminate a pregnancy at certain times in that pregnancy. There is not even an affirmative right to travel across state lines.

**JG:** Another example is the right to vote. We talk about a right to vote as if there is an affirmative right to vote in the Constitution, but it is not there. There are certain amendments that say the right to vote cannot be denied on the basis of race, sex, or age. That leaves a lot of other reasons that the State can deny you access to the vote.

**MR:** Recent events have made the general public more aware of the Supreme Court, and its power. How do you think we should view that power?

the United States or by any state on account of sex." Like the Reconstruction amendments and others associated with individual rights, it gives Congress the power of enforcement. Fifty years later, it remains unratified.

**1976** Congress passes the Hyde Amendment, which bars Medicaid coverage for abortions, making it even more difficult for low-income women to access abortions.

**1981** Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first female justice of the Supreme Court.

**1992** In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Supreme Court expands the circumstances under which states may regulate abortion.

**2003** In *Lawrence v. Texas*, the Supreme Court holds that sodomy/intimate association is protected by the Constitution.

**2005** In *Castle Rock v. Gonzales*, which involves an estranged husband who violated a restraining order and abducted and murdered his children, the Supreme Court holds that police have no duty to enforce a restraining order.

**2009** Sonia Sotomayor becomes the first woman of color appointed to the Supreme Court.

**2015** In *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court holds that bans on same-sex marriage violate the Constitution.

**2022** In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, the Supreme Court declares that *Roe v. Wade* was wrongly decided, that the Due Process Clause's guarantee of liberty cannot be understood to include the right to end a pregnancy, and that the right to end a pregnancy is not part of the "history and traditions" of the United States. As evidence, justices in the majority cite what people thought the Fourteenth Amendment meant at the time it was ratified, and the fact that many states at that time were passing laws that criminalized abortion.

## “Penumbra” is a distinct word for describing the fairly uncontroversial idea that a lot of specific things are protected within the very broad language of the Constitution.

**JG:** Constitutional law has to be given meaning, and it's inevitably a human process to do so. We want to be careful of valorizing the Supreme Court too much, and assuming that decisions that come down from the Court are correct. As opposed to acknowledging that the Court's decisions have legal authority.

I think it gets a little too easy to think of the Supreme Court as having some sort of additional insight into what the Constitution means—as opposed to being this group of nine people whose decisions about what it means bind us politically and legally. But that doesn't mean we have to accept their assumptions about how the world works, and how they got there.

We need to be thinking about the Supreme Court as a political branch that simply has different legal and professional constraints than other branches do, but not give it too much magical power.

**MR:** In the play, Heidi discusses this idea of "penumbra," which she describes as, she's on stage, and the lights are on, and there's this shadowy edge, and then there's the audience and darkness. And she says, the penumbra is the shadowy edge. Can you share how this beautiful sort of metaphor has actual legal context and meaning?

**JG:** In *Griswold v. Connecticut*, Justice William O. Douglas uses the term penumbra to describe how things that are not specifically referenced in the Constitution are nonetheless protected by the Constitution—that is, that the Constitution protects a larger category of items, a larger group of things, than the specific words in the text.

Among those he mentions is freedom of association, which is a very important right that the Supreme Court has found to exist in the First Amendment, even though it's not mentioned, because the ability to associate with one another is so crucial to the other rights described, like speech, that it is within the penumbra of things that are protected.

“Penumbra” is a distinct word for describing the fairly uncontroversial idea that a lot of specific things are protected within the very broad language of the

Constitution. Then the fight simply becomes “well, which are the things that are within that right, and which are the things outside of it.”

**MR:** How can an individual try to effect change when they are frustrated with the laws, or decisions being handed down?

**KM:** The recipe for being involved in change is the same as it always has been, which is to get involved in the kinds of organizations that are doing the kinds of work that you want to see done. We shouldn't be paralyzed by what the court is doing. I mean absolutely not—the opposite. It should galvanize people to do more, to find the workarounds that many organizations and many people are already involved in, and join forces.

### BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

*Dramaturgy & Research by  
Joanna Grisinger, Kate Masur and  
Maren Robinson*

*Written by Joanna Grisinger, Kate Masur  
and Maren Robinson with contributions  
by PJ Powers and Lara Goetsch*

*Editing and Graphic Design  
by Lara Goetsch*

*What the Constitution Means to Me  
promotional image design by  
Michal Janicki, featuring photography  
by Joe Mazza / brave lux, inc.*

**Our Mission:** TimeLine Theatre presents stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative organization produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

## SPOTLIGHTS ON STEP INTO TIME AND OUR FUTURE NEW HOME



*Scenes from Step Into Time: Jumpin' Jazz & Bathtub Gin 1923 (clockwise from top): Executive Director Mica Cole, Artistic Director PJ Powers, and supporter Janice Feinberg; Donica Lynn crooning '20s-style tunes; TimeLine's Company Members; and attendees enjoying the dance floor. Photos by Aubrey Jane Photos.*

### THE JOINT WAS JUMPIN' AND WE HAD A FLAPPIN' GOOD TIME!

On Saturday, March 25, TimeLine's annual Step Into Time gala took us back 100 years to 1923 for a dazzling evening full of dancing, drinks (shhh), and fun! We're thrilled to report that we raised more than \$350,000 in net proceeds—with every cent directly supporting TimeLine's mission and programming. THANK YOU to all who made the night a huge success!

If you couldn't attend, check out the photos at left! Plus you can get a complete recap of the evening by watching our recap video, perusing the official Step Into Time photo albums, or watching the “Together, WE are TimeLine” video that premiered at the event—all available on our website at [timelinetheatre.com/step-into-time-2023](http://timelinetheatre.com/step-into-time-2023).

## IT'S TIME

THE CAMPAIGN FOR **TIMELINE'S NEW HOME**



TimeLine's progress toward establishing the first home of our own—located at 5035 N. Broadway Avenue (near the corner of Broadway and Argyle) in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood—continues. **Read more about this thrilling project in the *What the Constitution Means to Me* program book or via the webpage below!** And to learn about ways you can support, please contact Chelsea Smith, Director of Major Gifts, at [chelsea@timelinetheatre.com](mailto:chelsea@timelinetheatre.com) or 773.281.8463 x116.

[TIMELINETHEATRE.COM/ITS-TIME](http://TIMELINETHEATRE.COM/ITS-TIME)



# OUR 2023-24 SEASON

EXPLORING TODAY'S ISSUES THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PAST



SEPTEMBER 19 - OCTOBER 29, 2023

Broadway In Chicago's Broadway Playhouse, 175 E. Chestnut

CHICAGO PREMIERE

BY STEFANO MASSINI

ADAPTED BY BEN POWER

DIRECTED BY NICK BOWLING  
AND VANESSA STALLING

Weaving together nearly two centuries of history, this 2022 Tony Award winner for Best Play is the quintessential story of western capitalism rendered through the lens of a single immigrant family.



NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 23, 2023

TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington

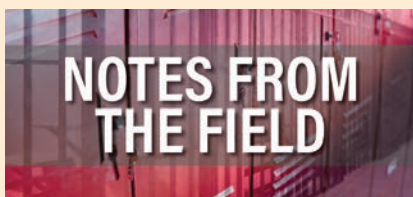
CHICAGO PREMIERE

BY JEREMY KAREKEN & DAVID MURRELL  
AND GORDON FARRELL

BASED ON THE BOOK BY  
JOHN D'AGATA AND JIM FINGAL

DIRECTED BY MECHELLE MOE

Drawing from true events, this play is a gripping and fast-paced comedic showdown between truth and fact set in the world of non-fiction publishing.



JANUARY 31 - MARCH 24, 2024

TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington

CHICAGO PREMIERE

BY ANNA DEAVERE SMITH

DIRECTED BY MIKAEL BURKE

Hailed by *The New York Times* as "a searing and urgent work," this innovative first-person documentary piece, which utilizes verbatim dialogue pulled from more than 250 real accounts, shines a light on the stories of those caught in America's school-to-prison pipeline.



MAY 8 - JUNE 30, 2024

TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington

WORLD PREMIERE

BY DOLORES DÍAZ

DIRECTED BY SANDRA MARQUEZ

This startling look at conflicts of climate change, race, and gender in the days leading up to an infamous dust storm in 1930s Texas was developed through TimeLine's Playwrights Collective, which also nurtured recent hits *Campaigns, Inc.* and the Jeff Award-winning *Relentless*.

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