

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Producer Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE ANNOUNCES DIALOGUE STARTERS FOR
ARENA CIVIL DIALOGUE COVERING
CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS
MARCH 30, 2020

***** Dialogue topics for the rest of the season will discuss justice for minority groups
and the reformation of opinions *****

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater continues to host **Arena Civil Dialogues**, sponsored by Exelon, to engage the D.C.-area community. Now in its third season, scholar, professor and public intellectual **Amitai Etzioni** curates and moderates discussions focusing on topics and questions in today's headlines. All dialogues will be held in the **Molly Smith Study at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater from 5:30-7 p.m.**

Arena Civil Dialogues bring together dialogue starters with expertise on the evening's topic. The dialogue starters for March 30 will include **Tabatha Abu El-Haj, Allen Dickerson, Lee Drutman, Nick Penniman, Paul Seamus Ryan** and **Scott Walter**.

This Civil Dialogue will examine if campaign contributions are legalized bribery or a form of free speech.

Upcoming Schedule

Monday, March 30, 2020: Are campaign contributions a legalized bribery or a form of free speech?

Monday, May 18, 2020: Diversity within unity.

How we can do justice to minority groups and immigrants and nurture national unity?

Monday, July 13, 2020: Changing hearts and minds.

Can we ever reach those "who don't get it"?

There will be a reception before each event, starting at 5 p.m. in the Molly Smith Study. This event is free and open to the public; reservations are required.

For more information and to register for future Arena Civil Dialogues, visit: arenastage.org/civildialogues.

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March 30 Dialogue Starter Biographies:

Amitai Etzioni (*Curator and Moderator*) is a university professor and professor of international relations at The George Washington University. He served as a senior advisor at the Carter White House; taught at Columbia University, Harvard University and University of California at Berkeley; and served as president of the American Sociological Association (ASA). A study by Richard Posner ranked him among the top 100 American intellectuals. Etzioni is the author of many books, including *The Limits of Privacy* (1999) and *Privacy in a Cyber Age* (2015). His most recent book, *Happiness is the Wrong Metric: A Liberal Communitarian Response to Populism*, was published by Springer in January 2018.

Tabatha Abu El-Haj is an associate professor of law at Drexel University. Her principal interest is the American political process. With a background in the sociology of law, she is particularly attentive to the role of statutory reform and constitutional doctrine in increasing the democratic responsiveness of political institutions. Her research is shaped by the conviction that the role of citizens in democratic politics does not begin and end on Election Day. Her publications include *Networking the Party: First Amendment Rights & The Pursuit of Responsive Party Government* in the *Columbia Law Review* and *Beyond Campaign Finance Reform* in the *Boston College Law Review*.

Allen Dickerson is legal director of the Institute for Free Speech, where he leads the institute's nationwide First Amendment litigation efforts. In that role, he has argued more than a dozen matters before federal courts of appeal and state supreme courts, testified before Congress and provided regular comments to the federal agencies tasked with regulating political activity. In addition to his work with the institute, Allen serves as a judge advocate in the United States Army Reserve. He is a graduate of Yale College and New York University School of Law.

Lee Drutman is a senior fellow in the political reform program at New America. He is the author of *Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop: The Case for Multiparty Democracy in America* (Oxford University Press, 2020) and *The Business of America is Lobbying* (Oxford University Press, 2015), winner of the 2016 American Political Science Association's Robert A. Dahl Award, given for "scholarship of the highest quality on the subject of democracy." He is also the co-host of the podcast *Politics in Question*, and writes for the *New York Times*, *Vox* and *FiveThirtyEight*, among other outlets. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley and a B.A. from Brown University.

Nick Penniman is the founder and CEO of Issue One. Prior to founding Issue One, Nick was the founder and executive director of the Huffington Post Investigative Fund, Washington director of the Schumann Center for Media and Democracy and publisher of the *Washington Monthly* magazine. In 2016, he coauthored *Nation on the Take* with Wendell Potter, which was widely embraced, from liberal *New York Times* columnists to Republican senators. He has served on multiple nonprofit boards, including the Center for Responsive Politics and the Homeless Empowerment Project.

Paul Seamus Ryan joined Common Cause as vice president for policy and litigation in October 2016 and has specialized in political law for more than 20 years. He is former deputy executive director of the Campaign Legal Center (2004-16) and political reform project director at the Center for Governmental Studies (1999-2004). Paul has litigated before courts throughout the nation and has testified as an expert on election law before Congress, as well as state and local governments. He has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News and other news outlets, and is quoted regularly by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and other news publications. Paul is a graduate of the UCLA School of Law (2001) and the University of Montana (1998).

Page 3— Civil Dialogue starters announced for March 30, 2020

Scott Walter is president of the Capital Research Center. He served in the George W. Bush administration as special assistant to the president for Domestic Policy and was vice president for publications and research at the Philanthropy Roundtable. There he edited *Philanthropy* magazine and produced donor guidebooks on public policy research, school choice and assistance to the poor. Walter writes regularly for PhilanthropyDaily.com, and previously served as a senior fellow at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and as senior editor of the American Enterprise Institute's flagship publication. A native of Knoxville, Tennessee, he is a graduate of Georgetown University. He lives with his wife and children in Virginia.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays and impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC) is a Fortune 100 energy company with the largest number of electricity and natural gas customers in the U.S. Exelon does business in 48 states, the District of Columbia and Canada and had 2017 revenue of \$33.5 billion. Exelon serves approximately 10 million customers in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania through its Atlantic City Electric, BGE, ComEd, Delmarva Power, PECO and Pepco subsidiaries. Exelon is one of the largest competitive U.S. power generators, with more than 32,000 megawatts of nuclear, gas, wind, solar and hydroelectric generating capacity comprising one of the nation's cleanest and lowest-cost power generation fleets. The company's Constellation business unit provides energy products and services to approximately 2 million residential, public sector and business customers, including more than two-thirds of the Fortune 100. Follow Exelon on Twitter @Exelon.

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