

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baratunde Thurston and Katherine Maher To Kick Off Philadelphia's TED Democracy Fireside Chat Series at the National Constitution Center

*The first-of-its-kind free event will be open to the public in addition to being live-streamed at
community watch parties across the city*

PHILADELPHIA, June 27, 2024 – Visit Philadelphia today announced that Emmy-nominated producer, writer and public speaker **Baratunde Thurston** will join NPR President and CEO **Katherine Maher** in Philadelphia for the first **TED Democracy Fireside Chat**, which will take place at the National Constitution Center on July 9.

The TED Democracy Fireside Chat series was created to align with the cultural conversations that take place as we move toward America's 250th anniversary such as what democracy means in our society and how it could evolve. This free event will be open to the public, with additional community watch parties being held at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania and The Fallser Club.

Thurston and Maher will each be sharing new perspectives on Democracy as a practice with a look at the past and how our actions of today are impacting the future.

The conversations will also include a look at where we go from here and feature a Q&A session facilitated by *New York Times* best-selling author and journalist, A.J. Jacobs.

"We are so excited to officially kick off our multi-year TED Democracy series with our first fireside chat next month. The fact that we are able to open up these critical conversations to the public in several different ways really highlights what this program is all about," said Visit Philadelphia president and CEO Angela Val. "This is all about bringing together thought leaders from across the country to take part in important discussions about democracy's past, present and future and there is no better city to host these talks than where it all started almost 250 years ago."

The Fireside Chat series serves as a platform to challenge our perspectives on modern democracy and exchange ideas about its influence on our daily lives. This event is the first of three Fireside Chats happening in Philadelphia this year. The series starts with

an exploration of the benefits of living in a democracy followed by two additional chats about the importance of active participation and how diverse communities can unite and progress despite their differences. Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro will participate in a TED Fireside Chat later this year.

“For the next three years, TED and the City of Philadelphia will be putting together events that will foster a renewed spirit of discourse and dialogue all centered around the idea of democracy in America,” said TED CEO Jay Herratti. “With the Fireside Chats this year, the speaker series in 2025 and a day-long event in 2026, there will be something for everyone to check out, whether in person or streaming online.”

Last month, Visit Philadelphia officially [announced](#) the launch of the multi-year TED Democracy series focused on the future of democracy as part of its official release of activities, events, and activations surrounding the celebration of our nation’s 250th anniversary of independence.

Members of the public interested in attending the Fireside Chat can sign up for a free ticket [here](#). Information about community watch parties can be found visitphilly.com/ted.

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About Visit Philadelphia:

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region’s official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia’s image, drive visitation and boost the economy. On Greater Philadelphia’s official visitor website, visitphilly.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages.

Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the site an effective trip-planning tool. Visitors can also find loads of inspiration on Visit Philly’s social media channels.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/media-center.

About TED

TED is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to discovering, debating and spreading ideas that spark conversation, deepen understanding and drive meaningful change. Our organization is devoted to curiosity, reason, wonder and the pursuit of knowledge — without an agenda. We welcome people from every discipline and culture who seek a deeper understanding of the world and connection with others, and we invite everyone to engage with ideas and activate them in your community.

TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, but today it spans a multitude of worldwide communities and initiatives exploring everything from science and business to education, arts and global issues. In addition to the TED Talks curated from our annual conferences and published on TED.com, we produce [original podcasts](#), [short video series](#), [animated educational lessons \(TED-Ed\)](#) and TV programs that are translated into more than 100 languages and distributed via partnerships around the world. Each year, thousands of independently run [TEDx events](#) bring people together to share ideas and bridge divides in communities on every continent. Through the [Audacious Project](#), TED has helped catalyze more than \$3 billion in funding for projects that seek to make the world more beautiful, sustainable and just. In 2020, TED launched [Countdown](#), an initiative to accelerate solutions to the climate crisis and mobilize a movement for a net-zero future, and in 2023 TED launched [TED Democracy](#) to spark a new kind of conversation focused on realistic pathways towards a more vibrant and equitable future. View a full list of [TED's many programs and initiatives](#).

Follow TED on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), and [X](#).

MEDIA STATEMENT FOR FIRESIDE CHAT SERIES

Visit Philadelphia is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the rich cultural and historical heritage of our city, including its role as the birthplace of modern American democracy. We are committed to making Philadelphia the most welcoming and inclusive city in the U.S. for visitors and residents.

The TED Fireside Chat series is carefully curated to provide an experience that respects diverse viewpoints. We aim to provide our attendees at these Fireside chats with a thought-provoking experience that will be educational, but not alienate anyone based on their individual views or beliefs.

As we approach the nation's semiquincentennial, we strive to maintain a forum that encourages informed dialogue and fosters mutual respect, true to the spirit of the dialogues held by our founding fathers nearly 250 years ago in Philadelphia.

Visit Philadelphia does not participate in political campaigns, nor support or oppose candidates for public office. We expressly disclaim any statement, or inference, of endorsement or opposition of any political candidate at any TED Democracy event, whether made by its speakers, participants or otherwise.