



## ***A Common Cause to All – A Convening of States on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dissolution of the Virginia House of Burgesses – March 2024***

---

State planners gathered for a second time in Colonial Williamsburg for three days of collaboration and unity for the 250th commemoration. Nearly 450 planners from 37 states and 44 Virginia localities registered for the conference as the nation prepares for its semiquincentennial commemoration.

Hosted by the VA250 Commission and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, this gathering provided a platform for attendees to participate in meaningful discussions about the upcoming 250th anniversary of the nation. The diverse group of speakers, including **Governor Glenn Youngkin** and **Justice John Charles Thomas**, brought unique perspectives to the table, inspiring enriching discussions.

The three-day conference featured a mix of inspiring keynotes, thought-provoking discussions, and a shared commitment to telling a comprehensive American story. From **Governor Youngkin's** call to delve into our collective past to **NBC News Correspondent Harry Smith's** emphasis on the diverse stories that weave the American fabric, the energy crackled with the promise of a commemoration that honors all voices.

**Retired Virginia Supreme Court Justice John Charles Thomas** challenged attendees to confront the complexities of history, urging them to move beyond a simplistic "melting pot" narrative to a rich tapestry reflecting the struggles and triumphs of all communities.

**Harvard Professor Danielle Allen** challenged attendees to acknowledge the limitations of the Declaration of Independence while celebrating its core values. **VA250 National Honorary Chair Carly Fiorina** echoed this sentiment, urging the commemoration to showcase America's potential for a more united future.

**Smithsonian Institution Under Secretary Kevin Gover** emphasized presenting historical facts, not opinions, while **National Constitution Center President Jeffrey Rosen** highlighted the urgency of educating the public about the Declaration's principles.

Breakout sessions tackled critical issues like engaging educators, crafting impactful digital experiences, and fostering collaboration across state lines. Attendees left empowered, not just by the knowledge gleaned, but by the shared spirit of "A Common Cause to All."

Capping off the program, attendees enjoyed a special presentation by Colonial Williamsburg. This reenactment depicted Virginia's reaction to the electrifying news of the Boston Tea Party. Initially marked as a day of somber reflection – fasting, humiliation, and prayer – the event pivoted towards a more forceful response against British rule. Lord Dunmore, Virginia's final royal governor, only fueled the flames of revolution by dissolving the House of Burgesses, the colony's representative body.

### By the numbers...

Nearly **450 planners from 37 states and 44 Virginia localities** registered for the conference, staying in hotels and enjoying restaurants throughout the Historic Triangle. News coverage included articles from the Virginian-Pilot, CNBC Squawkbox, Williamsburg-Yorktown Daily, and Shore Daily News.

**Social media impressions were more than 3.9 million** (March 17 – April 4). The VA250 website saw an increase of **10.3% in traffic** (6,700 visitors from March 1 – April 4, 2024, compared to the previous period of 6,100 visitors Jan 26 – Feb 29, 2024). The landing page saw 5,545 pageviews over the past year and was the 4<sup>th</sup> most viewed page on the website during that time.

**Total expenses of A Common Cause to All are estimated at \$432,021.56**

### VA250 Expenditures

Category	Amount	Notes
The A/V Company	\$82,439.00	
Food and beverage	\$81,270.40	Per diem amount per registrant
Travel	\$5,497.91	
Photography	\$2,037.48	
Program printing	\$2,560.00	
Supplies	\$762.19	Name badges, etc.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$174,566.98</b>	

### Other Expenditures

Category	Amount	Notes
Colonial Williamsburg Fndn	\$240,000.00	All CWF expenditures
VMHC	\$16,093.50	Danielle Allen honorarium and travel
JYF	\$1,361.08	Travel for a panelist
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$257,454.58</b>	

# ***Presentations, Distinguished Guests and Speakers included:***

## **Friday Keynote Speaker**



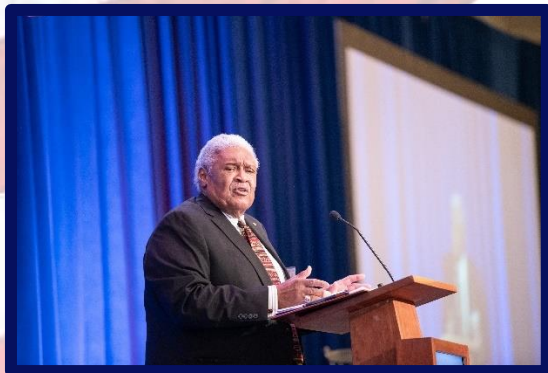
**Governor Glenn Youngkin**  
*Governor of Virginia*

## **Friday Keynote Speaker**



**Harry Smith**  
*NBC News Correspondent*

## **Tuesday Morning Keynote Remarks**



**Justice John Charles Thomas**  
*Supreme Court of Virginia (retired)*

## **Fireside Chat with Jefferson and Early American Scholars**



**Woody Holton, University of South Carolina**  
**Jane Kamensky, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation & Monticello**

## **Research Report: Approaches to Public Engagement**



**Matt Williams, Brand Federation**

## **Our Journey to 2026**



**Rosie Rios, America250**

**Presentation: The American Revolution  
by Ken Burns**



Paula Kerger, *PBS*  
Sarah Botstein, *Award-Winning Producer  
and Filmmaker*

**Tuesday Breakout Sessions**



Reaching Teachers and Students in Schools,  
Providing Impactful Digital and Virtual Content,  
2026 National Planning, Public History in  
Polarized Times, & Funding Your 250th

**States Dinner Keynote Remarks**



Danielle Allen, *Harvard University*

**States Dinner Keynote Remarks**



Carly Fiorina, *VA250 National Honorary Chair  
Chair, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*

**Wednesday Morning Keynote Remarks**



Kevin Gover, *Smithsonian Institution*

**Fireside Chat: Reaching Diverse and  
Underserved Communities**



Christy Coleman, *Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation*;  
Dr. Ashley Jordan, *African American Museum in PA*;  
Marvin-Alonzo Greer, *Maryland-National Capital Park  
& Planning Commission*; Dr. Noelle Trent, *Museum of  
African American History*

### Fireside Chat: Multistate Collaboration for 250<sup>th</sup> Programs Nationwide



Cheryl Wilson, VA250 Commission; Jonathan Lane, Massachusetts Revolution 250; Jonah Spivak, Vermont 250<sup>th</sup> Commission; Kevin Hampton, The Wisconsin Veterans Museum

### Breakout Group



State 250<sup>th</sup> Planners

### Breakout Group



Local VA250 Committees

### Closing Keynote



Jeffrey Rosen, National Constitution Center



Suzanne Youngkin, First Lady of Virginia



Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares & Virginia Lt. Governor Winsome Earle-Sears

## What people are saying...

*"What an inspiring experience! I left excited for 250. Justice Thomas blew the roof off. Harry Smith was a treat. The lunch buffet on Tuesday was the best meal. I'll be talking about the oyster soup for awhile."*



*"I felt like a queen the entire time. Nothing like bringing together great people over great food discussing the real issues of the nation. Have not attended anything quite like it. Very fired up afterwards to get to work!"*

**Virginia**

*"The conference was outstanding. The venue, food and speakers were wonderful. The fireworks display in the garden of the Governor's Palace was a memory not to be forgotten."*

**Virginia**



*"The quality in speakers and conference content was impressive and really outshined the national effort."*

**Idaho**



*"Networking was invaluable. I made some great new connections. The whole experience was superb!"*

**Ohio**



*"As a tourism and marketing professional, I was fascinated by how much I learned so quickly about our founding fathers and the moral philosophy that guides their pursuits."*

**Georgia**



*“It was great meeting new people and seeing how everyone is navigating America's history in light of the 250th. The hospitality of Colonial Williamsburg was impeccable and getting able to wander around the historical section was amazing.”*

**New York**



*“This was an amazing event. I was truly inspired to come back to my community and kickoff our local celebration of the 250th anniversary of this great nation. I met so many wonderful people and garnered some ideas from what others are doing.”*

**Maryland**

**A Closer Look at Numbers**

• **Social Media Impact (March 2024)**

Social Platform	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	LinkedIn	Total
Reach/Impressions	7,772	675	3,847	19,126	31,420
Engagement	1,900	334		882	3,116
Follows from March 2024	+ 139	+ 117	+ 39	+ 135	+ 430

• **Website Impact – March 17 – April 4 compared to January 26 – February 29**

	Users	Views
VA250 Website	+ 10.3%	+ 11.5%
Common Cause Event Page	+109.88 %	+ 94.25%

• **In the Media**

March 26, 2024 – Shore Daily News

**VA250 CONFERENCE CALLS FOR UNITY IN AMERICA’S 250TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION**

March 20, 2024 – The Virginian-Pilot – Sam Schaffer

**Finding Our Common Cause for America’s 250th Birthday**

March 17, 2024 – WY Daily

**Colonial Williamsburg, VA250 to Host Second Planning Event for America’s 250<sup>th</sup>**