

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## KPBS Receives \$3 Million Gift from Joan and Irwin Jacobs for Democracy Project

March 19, 2024 (SAN DIEGO, CA) – KPBS has received a \$3 million gift from Irwin and Joan Jacobs to fund a new initiative to provide information and resources to ensure all San Diegans understand their opportunity to engage in the democratic process.

“KPBS’ news service and community partnerships make it uniquely situated to address the growing divisiveness in our region by providing space for people to have their voice heard,” says Deanna Mackey, KPBS general manager. “Joan and Irwin’s generous gift will allow us to engage in this important work in San Diego and I am incredibly grateful for their support.”

The gift will fund the democracy project for three years, leading up to and beyond the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026. KPBS intends to develop an endowment to support governance and civics reporting with the launch of the democracy project.

KPBS’ democracy project will include a new journalism team focused on comprehensive election coverage and local government reporting, Spanish translation of the coverage, civic education, expansion of the Voter Hub and a social/digital media-based Democracy Anchor. The anchor will curate and create content to engage younger audiences in understanding the impact of voting, as well as participating in and being aware of decisions from school boards to city councils.

KPBS will lead community conversations around these topics, including bringing the StoryCorps program One Small Step to San Diego. One Small Step facilitates and shares conversations between strangers with different political views in an effort to remind the country of the humanity in all of us, even those with whom we disagree. The conversations will be recorded and KPBS will feature the interviews on broadcast and digital platforms, and share the experiences via events and community town hall discussions. The project

will partner with local community and nonprofit organizations that support respectful dialogue.

In addition, the project includes a unique partnership between KPBS and nonprofit news organizations inewssource and Voice of San Diego. As part of the partnership, both inewssource and Voice of San Diego will create political/governance content for their own platforms and that will be featured on KPBS TV, radio and digital platforms.

inewssource will produce reporting on democracy and collaborate closely with their San Diego Documenters program to identify and write about access issues in public meetings and at the polls. The Documenters are citizens who are trained to attend public meetings and report on actions taken.

Voice of San Diego will host its annual Politifest, a regional public affairs summit that focuses on issues affecting San Diego communities and California as a whole. Voice of San Diego will also expand the production of its San Diego 101 series under the KPBS democracy project.

“The democracy project strives to expand the culture of civic engagement in our community through increased public conversation and increased coverage of issues that matter to our region, specifically within communities that are often left on the fringes of political power. These three nonprofit news organizations are coming together to address access to information and coverage needs across the county to build a more informed, connected future for all San Diegans,” says Mackey.

The Jacobs are longtime supporters of KPBS, having previously made gifts to support the expansion of its newsroom, its digital innovation and the building capital campaign.

“Joan and Irwin’s gifts to KPBS over time have continually allowed us to make transformational change in our digital content, becoming a significant news service, and now - I believe - in helping bring people together in divisive times. Their generosity to KPBS is by extension a commitment to the people of San Diego County to invest in our collective future,” says Mackey.

## About KPBS:

KPBS connects, reflects and serves all of our communities with trusted programming and dialogue. KPBS delivers this content to more than 1.3 million audience members weekly via multiple platforms, including television, radio, and digital media. As a public service of San Diego State University, education is a core value – from children’s programming to community discussions on important issues our region is facing, to local news coverage. KPBS provides stories that make us think, help us dream, and keep us connected. For more information, visit [kpbs.org](http://kpbs.org).

## About Inewssource:

Founded in 2009 as one of the nation’s first nonprofit newsrooms, inewssource is an award-winning investigative and accountability newsroom working to improve lives in San Diego and Imperial Counties. inewssource puts community first with its Documenters program, part of a national network that trains and pays citizens to cover public meetings. [inewssource.org](http://inewssource.org)

## About Voice of San Diego:

Voice of San Diego was founded in 2005 to investigate local institutions and explain and educate residents about current events in San Diego public affairs. It was the first digital-only, nonprofit news organization set up to serve a local community and it became the inspiration to now more than 300 local nonprofit news outlets. Voice of San Diego’s mission is to pursue investigative journalism for a better San Diego and nearly 4,000 donors and dozens of sponsors and foundation grants make that reporting possible. For more information, visit [vosd.org](http://vosd.org).

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