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**For one day only, one of Washington’s most surprising landmarks
opens its doors to the public**

America 250 program takes visitors from Dolley Madison’s parlor and NASA’s first headquarters to Federal Circuit courtrooms where judges hear cases shaping tomorrow’s innovations

WASHINGTON — Just steps from the White House, one building brings together an unusual sweep of American history: Dolley Madison’s restored parlor, the suffrage movement’s fight for voting rights, NASA’s first headquarters and courtrooms where federal judges now hear cases shaping the future of technology and innovation.

On July 3, the public will be invited inside.

The Federal Circuit Center for Innovation & Law will host “**Justice Up Close, History All Around,**” a one-day America 250 program opening the Howard T. Markey National Courts Building Complex to the public on the eve of Independence Day, giving visitors a chance to experience a side of Washington few ever see.

Inside, visitors can explore state-of-the-art interactive exhibits, meet first lady Dolley Madison and abolitionist Paul Jennings, see a real moon rock, put on a robe, take part in a mock trial and speak directly with federal judges. Family activities and historic artifacts will be featured throughout the experience. The program connects the building’s storied past to the work of the Federal Circuit today, where judges hear cases involving inventions, technology and the legal protections that help turn new ideas into progress.

“Opening these halls for America 250 gives visitors a rare chance to experience how law and discovery have helped move our country forward,” said Chief Judge Kimberly A. Moore of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. “We want every guest to feel that story for themselves.”

Opened in fall 2025 as the nation’s first courthouse-based innovation and civics learning center, the Center is normally reserved for scheduled school groups and has already welcomed more

than 1,000 students on Washington class trips. The July 3 program offers rare public access to a site many Washington visitors pass without ever seeing inside. Afterward, the Center will return to school-group access while planning future public events.

Tickets

Free timed-entry passes will be released in three waves at 11:30 a.m. Eastern time May 19, June 10 and June 29 at innovationcenter.cafc.uscourts.gov. Up to 10 passes may be reserved per order for entry times between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. July 3. The Howard T. Markey National Courts Building Complex is located at 717 Madison Place N.W., Washington, D.C. 20439. Visit www.cafc.uscourts.gov for tickets.

Media preview

Credentialed journalists may tour Thursday, July 2, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Reporters will have opportunities to interview Chief Judge Kimberly A. Moore and gather B-roll. An advisory with RSVP instructions will be released June 24.

ABOUT THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT CENTER FOR INNOVATION & LAW:

Opened in fall 2025, the Federal Circuit Center for Innovation & Law uses mock trials, tours, interactive exhibits, and conversations with Federal Circuit judges to connect civics, history, science, and technology. Through immersive, state-of-the-art interactive technology, visitors uncover pivotal moments in American history and innovation that have changed the world, while exploring the court's role in protecting the ideas that drive progress. More than 1,000 students have already taken part in its programs inside the Howard T. Markey National Courts Building on Lafayette Square.

Web: innovationcenter.cafc.uscourts.gov | [Instagram: @innovatecafc](https://www.instagram.com/innovatecafc)