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**PRESS RELEASE****A Zócalo/New America Foundation Connecting California Event  
Zócalo in San Francisco: How Do We Put The People Back in The Initiative Process?**

**Moderated by Joe Mathews, Senior Fellow, New America Foundation**

**ADMISSION:**

Free, reservations recommended at [www.zocalopublicsquare.org](http://www.zocalopublicsquare.org). Open to the public. Hosted reception to follow event.

**WHEN:**

Wednesday, September 21, 2011, 7:00pm

**WHERE:**

[Fort Mason Center](#)

Golden Gate Room at the Conference Center, Building A  
Marina Blvd and Buchanan St., San Francisco, CA 94123

Parking is available at the Fort Mason Center, \$8 for all day parking.

**WHAT:**

In the fall of 1911, the new governor, a lawyer from San Francisco, convinced California voters to add the recall, referendum, and initiative to the constitution as a way to stop the political machines. These days, direct democracy, and the initiative process, is itself a machine, accessible only by interests and people with big money. After a century, join us at Zócalo as we ask: can California's experiment with direct democracy be saved? And if so, how? We'll hear from a panel of experts from California and around the world who explain how new technology and new research suggest a variety of ways that democracy might be returned to the people. Join the discussion with **Kim Alexander** of the California Voter Foundation; **Bruno Kaufmann**, Swiss-Swedish journalist and president of the leading direct democracy think tank, Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe; and **Paul Jacob**, founder of the term limits movement and president of the Citizens in Charge Foundation, a 50-state volunteer network on direct democracy.

**About Zócalo Public Square**

Zócalo Public Square connects people to ideas and to each other in an open, accessible, non-partisan and broad-minded spirit. Through our web magazine, lectures, panels, screenings, and conferences, Zócalo takes on ideas that enhance our understanding of community-the forces that strengthen or undermine human connectedness and social cohesion.

We believe that over specialization and narrowcasting undermine the public square and are committed to welcoming a new, young and diverse generation to the conversation.

Established in Los Angeles in 2003, Zócalo roams across L.A., and has traveled to Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, Phoenix and as far as Shanghai, Berlin and Guadalajara. In our eight years, we have featured over 800 compelling thinkers and doers from a wide range of fields-politics, governance, humanities, health, economics, education, technology, foreign policy, arts, science and beyond-who explore how we see and relate to one another, be it locally, regionally, nationally, or globally.