



**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Dr. Robert Luckett, Director  
Margaret Walker Center  
Jackson State University  
601-979-3935  
[robert.luckett@jsums.edu](mailto:robert.luckett@jsums.edu)

Jackson State University and the Margaret Walker Center to host screening of *DREAM ON*, a new film about the perilous state of the American Dream, followed by a panel discussion with political comedian John Fugelsang at 6 p.m., Tuesday, January 26, in the JSU Student Center Theater.

**Press Materials:**

<http://pppdocs.com/dreamon.html>

Jackson, MS—From Bernie Sanders to Donald Trump, the 2016 presidential candidates share one thing in common: a conviction that they can revitalize the American Dream. Pinned between stagnant wages and the soaring costs of housing, education and healthcare, millions of Americans are struggling to make ends meet. To address these urgent issues before the critical election next year, the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University will host a preview screening of *DREAM ON* before it airs on PBS, followed by a panel discussion with political comedian and actor John Fugelsang via Skype; Jody Owens, Managing Attorney for the Mississippi office of the Southern Poverty Law Center; and Mississippi State Senator David Blount at the JSU Student Center Theater at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26.

*DREAM ON* features John Fugelsang as he retraces the journey of Alexis de Tocqueville, whose study of our young country in 1831 came to define America as a place where anyone could climb the ladder of economic opportunity. Following in the Frenchman's footsteps, Fugelsang speaks with fast-food workers and retirees, prisoners and entrepreneurs, undocumented immigrants and community organizers about their hopes, dreams, and daily struggles. *DREAM ON* explores whether the optimistic spirit of the American Dream that Tocqueville observed is alive and well in the twenty-first century.

"We are excited to engage the JSU community and the broader public in this important conversation, particularly during this presidential-election year," says Margaret Walker Center Director, Dr. Robert Luckett. "This film will undoubtedly prompt a spirited discussion."

In recent years the venerable American Dream has become an empty promise for increasing numbers of Americans. Millions of middle class Americans are now unable to maintain the standard of living that they took for granted growing up, and more low-income families are unable to lift themselves out of poverty. As countless Americans struggle with diminished prospects for the future, our core beliefs about the value of work, the inevitability of progress, the fairness of the system, and America's standing in the world are being shaken.

"Most Americans believe that the term 'working poor' should be an oxymoron: if you work full time, you should not be poor," says director Roger Weisberg. "But today, one in four American workers, 30 million people, earns less than the federal poverty level for a family of four. Rather than taking a conventional documentary approach to the problem of rising income inequality and declining social mobility, I decided to adopt the cherished American film tradition of the road trip and follow the journey of Alexis de Tocqueville." For Weisberg, "by capturing the stories of a diverse group of Americans struggling to climb the economic ladder, we were able to put an intimate human face on the endangered American Dream."

John Fugelsang says, "Tocqueville didn't want to create a simple travelogue, and neither did we. He wanted to understand how America worked, and we wanted to see how America could keep working. We found that the divisions and dysfunction in the areas Tocqueville reported on—in commerce, government,

religion, and race relations—were still prevalent and festering today. We wanted to report on the whole of America in all her imperfect splendor. And by not turning away from her defects, we wanted to find new reasons to hope.”

Fugelsang was the host of *America's Funniest Home Videos* and has appeared on CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, Fox News, HBO, and NPR. Currently, Fugelsang hosts a daily political comedy program called “Tell Me Everything” on the new SiriusXM Insight Channel. As a comedian, actor, writer, talk show host, and pundit, Fugelsang’s eclectic background allows him to bring equal doses of wit and wisdom to the film.

*DREAM ON* is the 32nd documentary produced and directed by Roger Weisberg for national public television. His previous films have won over one-hundred-and-fifty awards including Emmy, duPont, and Peabody awards, as well as two Academy Award nominations. *DREAM ON* builds on this extensive body of work and represents the culmination of nearly four decades of reporting on ways to remove barriers and expand opportunities for disadvantaged Americans.

This event is free and open to the public and is for educational purposes only.

*DREAM ON* was an official selection at the following film festivals:  
San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, San Luis Obispo, CA, *March 2015*  
Palm Beach International Film Festival, Boca Raton, FL, *March 2015*  
Worldfest-Houston, Houston, TX, *April 2015*  
New Jersey International Film Festival, New Brunswick, NJ, *June 2015*  
PhilaFilm: Philadelphia International Film Festival, Philadelphia, PA, *June 2015*  
Tiburon Film Society, Tiburon, CA, *July 2015*  
Massachusetts Independent Film Festival, Boston, MA, *August 2015*  
Harlem International Film Festival, New York, NY *September 2015*  
LA INDIE Film Festival, Hollywood, CA, *September 2015*  
Wine Country Film Festival, Sonoma, CA *September 2015*  
New York City Independent Film Festival, New York, NY, *October 2015*  
Ojai Film Festival, Ojai, CA *October 2015*  
Kansas International Film Festival, Kansas City, KS, *November 2015*  
Marda Loop Justice Film Festival, Calgary, Canada, *November 2015*

For more information about this event, contact the Margaret Walker Center at 601-979-3935 or e-mail [mwa@jsums.edu](mailto:mwa@jsums.edu). For further information about *DREAM ON*, please visit the web site at <http://www.pppdocs.com> or email [pppinfo@pppdocs.com](mailto:pppinfo@pppdocs.com).

*DREAM ON* is a production of Public Policy Productions, Inc., in association with Thirteen/WNET New York Produced and directed by Roger Weisberg; Written by John Fugelsang and Roger Weisberg; Edited by Pascal Akesson and Sandra Christie; Cinematography by Sandra Chandler and John Hazard; Sound by Alan Barker; Additional Field Production by Jeff Seelbach; Music composed by Richard Fiocca; Design and Animation by Bill Bergeron; Production Management by Suzanne Beffa; For WNET, Executive-in-Charge Stephen Segaller.

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