



Congressional Papers Section

N E W S L E T T E R

Society of American Archivists

Winter 2018 Edition

Message from the Chair

Hope Grebner Bibens

Dear CPS Colleagues,

I'm writing on the morning after the mid-term elections. The dust has settled and I am highly caffeinated. For me, it's the calm before the storm of the 2020 Iowa caucuses which will begin to take over Des Moines in the coming weeks as potential candidates descend on Iowa to test the waters. Carrying forward our theme of advocacy, I encourage all of you to continue your conversations with members of your congressional delegation who might be leaving office and forge relationships with your newly elected members of Congress. Talk with them about the value of preserving their records and why congressional collections are important primary sources. This is a crucial time for us to continue our advocacy efforts and I know we are all up to the task!

I would also like to take a moment to thank the Steering Committee for all of their hard work to draft a response to SAA's Congressional Records as Public Records statement. The letter and alternative statement written by the Steering Committee has been sent to SAA Council and you will find it published in this edition of the newsletter. Planning for CPS Day in Austin is underway. Please feel free to reach out to me with any ideas or suggestions that you have. I look forward to seeing everyone in the Lone Star State this summer!

Best wishes for a restful holiday season,

Hope

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Update from the Hill

Dina Mazina

The last couple months have brought some exciting changes to the Capitol Hill archivist community.

There are a number of staff changes going into the new year. Brandon Hirsch has been named Assistant Director of the Center. Additionally, the Secretary welcomed Debbie Davendonis as Leader McConnell's new archivist. She replaces Nan Moser who has replaced Deborah Skaggs Speth as Archivist at U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell and Secretary Elaine Chao Archives at the University of Louisville. Robin Reeder is retiring as Archivist of the U.S. House of Representatives in January. Heather Bourk will follow Robin as Archivist. We wish everyone the best of luck in their new positions!

Meanwhile, us committee archivists continue to meet regularly, hold meetings and training sessions, to improve and develop our archiving skills and better support all our partner repositories.

CPS Response to SAA Council Statement on Congressional Records as Public Records

In October 2018, members of the CPS Steering Committee participated in a conference call to discuss a section-wide response to SAA's recent public statement: [Congressional Records as Public Records](#), approved July 2018. That call led to a draft response statement from CPS, attempting to provide some missing context from SAA's original statement, and building on recent developments in Congress that have increased public access to congressional records. The letter and draft statement follow below.

Dear SAA Council Members:

The Congressional Papers Section acknowledges and applauds the time and effort invested by the Society of American Archivists Council and Committee on Public Policy in the creation of the Congressional Records as Public Records Statement. We believe the purpose of the statement is to increase and encourage the preservation of the records of all members of Congress and to ensure that all records are accessible in a timely and equitable manner. While CPS agrees with the intent of the statement and acknowledge that it has evolved since previous versions, we wish to express our belief that the issue is more complicated and nuanced than conveyed by the statement in its current form.

Since the creation of the House and Senate Historical Offices, both House and Senate have implemented many of the recommendations first articulated by the National Study Commission on Records and Documents of Federal Officials in 1977. Highlights include establishing uniform access rules to House and Senate records in the National Archives, establishing archival programs administered by professional archivists, creating records management guidance in the form of records schedules for both members and committees, and establishing training programs that include digital curation procedures.

A significant milestone was reached with the passage of H. Con. Res. 307 in 2008 which, "Declares that it is the sense of Congress that: (1) Members' congressional papers should be properly maintained; (2) each Member of Congress should take all necessary measures to manage and preserve the Member's own congressional papers; and (3) each Member of Congress should be encouraged to arrange for the deposit or donation of the Member's own noncurrent congressional papers with a research institution properly equipped to care for them, and to make these papers available for educational purposes at a time the Member considers appropriate."

We believe that a statement building on the progress made would be a logical next step toward our common goal of preserving all historical documentation of Congress and its members. Taking an incremental step would avoid seeding confusion among congressional offices, many of which feel increasingly cautious and under attack in our current charged political environment. We therefore have drafted a statement which we think builds on the history of progress made by Congress and the Congressional archivists and repository community. While our draft shares common ground with the current

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CPS Response to SAA Council Statement on Congressional Records as Public Records

statement in several respects, we believe it represents a more realistic path to achieve our shared goals.

We look forward to continued dialogue related to the preservation and access of congressional records. The CPS Steering Committee would welcome a conference call with SAA Council or the Committee on Public Policy if there are further questions or clarifications.

Sincerely,

Hope Grebner Bibens

On behalf of the Congressional Papers Section Steering Committee

Draft Statement on Congressional Records as Public Records

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) promotes the preservation of all archival documentation of Congress including the records of its members. Members' records include all recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, that are created or received in connection with the transaction of members' office business and preserved as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities, or because of the informational value contained within. Recorded information includes information created, manipulated, communicated, or stored in digital form.

Because Congress and its members represent the American people in matters of public policy, foreign policy, rights, interests, and benefits, the American people have a vested interest in ensuring that the entire documentary record of Congress is authentic, accurate, and that it is preserved as part of our country's documentary heritage.

The Society of American Archivists firmly believes that the records of members, like the records of congressional committees, should be defined as public records and preserved in a repository of the members' choosing that meets archival standards for long-term preservation of and access to historical records. Access to members' records should be aligned with the rules (House Rule VII and S. Res. 474 (96th Congress)) governing committee records, as appropriate for the nature and content of a member's papers and wishes.

Institutional Updates

West Virginia University

By Danielle Emerling

LYRASIS awards WVU Libraries grant to preserve congressional constituent correspondence data

West Virginia University Libraries has been awarded a \$27,000 LYRASIS Catalyst Fund grant for the project, “America Contacts Congress,” which will create a plan for preserving and providing access to U.S. congressional constituent correspondence data. The grant project plan and reports can be viewed online at: <https://bit.ly/2PFHz6r>.

Since the late 1970s, constituent correspondence has moved from paper to digital formats, and archives across the country now receive correspondence as data exports. WVU Libraries has developed an innovative open-source system that could make access to the data possible.

The LYRASIS grant will support a feasibility study that will assess the WVU Libraries open-source system and engage the congressional archives community to develop a roadmap for creating a cooperative data sharing infrastructure.

“We are honored that LYRASIS selected this project,” said Danielle Emerling, West Virginia & Regional History Center assistant curator and the grant’s principal investigator. “Constituent data sets have great potential for numerous research inquiries, analysis, and visualizations, and we’re excited to be one step closer to making the data available to researchers.”

Constituent correspondence with Congress provides unique opportunities to explore the perspectives of everyday Americans about issues affecting their lives. The data offers a look at public opinion in any given state or district and enables evaluations of the influence of public opinion on elected officials. It vividly illustrates the representative function of an office, particularly to underrepresented constituent groups whose voices are often absent from the histori-

cal record.

The WVRHC holds constituent correspondence data sets in the collections of Senator John D. (Jay) Rockefeller IV and Congressman Nick Joe Rahall II.

Through the grant, WVU Libraries will collaborate with congressional archives professionals at the University of Delaware, Drake University, the University of Montana, the University of Nevada Reno, the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia, and the United States Senate Historical Office. Additionally, members of the Association of the Centers for the Study of Congress and the Society of American Archivists’ Congressional Papers Section will participate.

LYRASIS, one of the nation’s largest non-profit member organizations serving archives, libraries, and museums, awards the Catalyst Fund to foster innovation among members and knowledge communities worldwide. This year, six projects were chosen by participants in the LYRASIS Leaders Circle and \$155,000 will be awarded.

W. R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University

By Mary Goolsby

We are pleased to announce two major acquisitions – the papers of Waco native Congressman Joe L. Barton, whose 33-year career included time as the Chair of the Commerce and Energy Committee; and the papers of McLennan County Commissioner Lester Gibson (Baylor ’74), who was the first African-American elected to the post since Reconstruction. His 28-year stint as commissioner was a time of advocacy for the local African-American community.

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Institutional Updates

Poage, cont.



Students work through historic photos

For the sixth year Poage Library hosted 100+ students participating in the iEngage Summer Civics Institute sponsored by the Baylor University School of Education.

Students, grades five through eight, rotate to five stations and explore the nuts and bolts of civic engagement at their age and beyond.



Collaboration Plus in Poage

The Graduate Research Center, housed in the Poage Library, opened the Collaboration Plus room this fall. The room features sound proofing, studio lighting, video conferencing technology, and, of course, a shiplap wall! The Collab+ can be used by students for job interviews, pre-recording lectures, and making videos for all kinds of uses.

The fall luncheon of The Standing Committee (TSC), the Poage Library's friends group, featured a ribbon-cutting "re-opening" three collections that were re-processed and entered into CuadraSTAR. The group is tackling the last \$30,000 needed to fully fund a large exhibit surrounding the Poage foyer. The exhibit, initiated by Debbie Davendonis, will tell the story of becoming a public servant and encouraging civic early this fall.

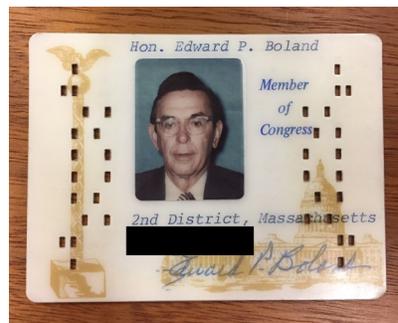


The papers of CFTC Commissioner Fowler West were re-opened with the papers of Congressmen Marvin Leath and John

Boston College

By Alison Harris and Katie Lamontagne

Boston College's John J. Burns Library has recently begun a two-year project focused on congressional archives, which will include making the papers of Massachusetts Representatives Edward P. Boland and Margaret Heckler available for research and study. The two collections total around 400 boxes (400 linear feet) and contain extensive correspondence, legislative files, issue files, campaign materials, photographs, and time-based media.



Boland's Congressional Member ID and Voting Card from the 95th Congress, Edward Boland congressional papers, John J.

Project Archivist Alison Harris is processing the papers of Edward P. Boland, a Democrat in the 2nd District of Massachusetts from 1953-1989. Boland served on several high-profile commit-

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Institutional Updates

Boston College, cont.

tees during his 36 years in Congress including Appropriations and Select Intelligence. Initial areas of interest include Vietnam, abortion, the environment, the Iran-Contra scandal, and urban development projects.



Heckler's Congressional member ID card, 93rd Congress, Margaret Heckler congressional papers, John

Project Archivist Katie Lamontagne is processing the papers of Margaret Heckler, who served as the Republican Representative from the 10th District of Massachusetts from 1967-1983, U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services Secretary from 1983-1985, and Ambassador to Ireland from 1986-1989. Her papers encompass materials from all three periods of her public service. Heckler served on the Veterans' Affairs, Agriculture, and Joint Economic Committees while in Congress. Legislative materials relate to veterans' health and educational benefits, foreign trade, women's rights, food stamp programs, alcohol fuels, crop subsidies, and nutrition.

Drake University

By Hope Grebner Bibens

On November 1, 2018 The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement hosted their annual Sussman Lecture with NASA Chief Historian Bill Barry. Dr. Barry spoke on NASA's



impact over the past 60 years. During the pre-lecture reception, items from the papers of



Senator Tom Harkin and Iowa Governor Robert Ray were on display. Prior to serving in the Senate, Harkin was a

member of the House of Representatives from 1974-1984 and served on the Space, Science, and Technology Committee that oversaw NASA. Harkin also has a personal interest in space exploration that stems from his time as a Navy jet pilot.

The Populist Caucus Files of the Senator Tom Harkin Papers are now open to researchers. As a member of the House, Harkin founded and led the 14-member group of liberal Midwestern Democrats in the early 1980s. The caucus promoted a government that worked on behalf of the common person and favored congressional control of the Federal Reserve and restoration of funds for small business. It also targeted natural gas prices and called on customers to protest by sending receipts of gas bills to the caucus. In addition to these themes, the caucus also promoted a greater political democracy through increased opportunities for broader voter participation.

Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, University of Kansas

By Sarah D'Antonio Gard

The Dole Archives enjoyed another lively semester of classes and events. A few highlights:

The Dole Archives hosted a seminar class of KU freshman in conjunction with the Undergraduate Honors Program, "Leadership, Legacy, and Collections." The course of 10 students convened over 10 sessions. Students examined Dole Ar-

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Institutional Updates

Dole, cont.

chives materials, visited area museums, co-convened with students in the KU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (non-credit continuing education for adults “50 and better”) to discuss the significance of history, collections, legacy, and memory. As a final project, each student created content for a “mini exhibit” featuring a topic from the Dole Archives, to be displayed in the future as part of a series of student work, “New Looks at a Legacy.”

In October, the Dole Institute hosted Kansas City’s own Sonia Warshawski, a Holocaust survivor, and a screening of the 2017 documentary about her life and legacy, *Big Sonia*, which featured a Q&A with her granddaughter and the film’s producer, Leah Warshawski. Both events were held on public school teacher in-service days and targeted to middle- and high-school students and their families to attend on their own. Teachers at Lawrence high schools promoted the events to their students and assigned en-

richment credit for attendance. Over 300 people attended each event.

Public education in the Dole Archives is continually increasing. This year, our public education coordinator taught over 900 students, ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade, in direct instruction (classes and tours) with an additional 600+ students indirectly (drop-in family events and programs). With the addition of the Discover with Dole monthly drop-in family events, professional development for teachers, and promoting our resources at teacher conferences, it has been a busy year!

The Dole Archive awarded its 2018 Research Fellowship to Tracy Roof, an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Richmond. Her book project, “Nutrition, Welfare, or Work Support? A Political History of the Food Stamp Program,” looks at the development of food stamps policy from 1964 to today. Roof is the author of *American Labor, Congress, and the Welfare State*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2011.

We also awarded several travel grants:

- Dean J. Kotlowski, Professor of History, Salisbury University, Maryland for “Indigenous Self-Determination across the Pacific: The United States Congress and Australian Parliament Compared, 1960-1993”
- Lindsay Drane, Ph.D. candidate, University



Sonia Warshawski speaks to students at the Dole Institute. Above is a picture of barracks at one of the concentration camps she lived in.

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Institutional Updates

Dole, cont.

of Houston for “Too Poor to Eat : A Socio-Political History of Food Stamps in the United States, 1964-1996”

- William D. Adler, Assistant Professor, Northeastern Illinois University for “Party Differences in Vice Presidential Selection”
- John Dearborn, Ph.D. candidate, Yale University for “The Representative Presidency: Development and Durability”
- Matthew J. Lacombe, Ph.D. candidate, Northwestern University for “Beyond Money: The National Rifle Association and Interest Group Power”

The Dole Institute was also fortunate to have a visit from Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole this fall. They were in the area for the dedication of a statue of Senator Bob Dole at Washburn University. Members of the Dole Institute Student Advisory Board, Friends and donors, and Dole Institute staff attended a brunch and remarks from Senator Dole.



Kids work on a flag puzzle at a Discover with Dole event.



Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole with Dole Institute staff.