

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 31 – June 2, 2009
Chicago, Illinois**

**Action: Draft Advocacy Agenda
(Prepared by the SAA Government Affairs Working Group)**

The Government Affairs Working Group was created by the SAA Council in August 2008. First among its duties and responsibilities is to “Develop an advocacy agenda for Council approval.”

The following draft “agenda” was created based on input (albeit limited) from Council members and Working Group members. We envision that:

- The Council will review and make changes in the draft agenda and then vet it with various member groups, and perhaps with the full SAA membership, to ensure that it represents broad interests. That vetting process might take place between the June and August 2009 Council meetings, thus allowing release of an approved agenda at the Joint Annual Meeting in Austin.
- The agenda will be an evolving and changeable document. It should be viewed as a working document that is updated as needed, and at least annually.
- The agenda itself will provide a simple statement on a given issue, which will serve as the basis for a much broader discussion of the issue via a discussion paper, white paper, or such other document as provides the details that may be needed by various interested audiences (such as members, policymakers, and the media) to have a full understanding of the issue and SAA’s stance on it. (For examples, see the National Humanities Alliance’s “Issues at a Glance” and “Support the National Endowment for the Humanities” issue brief, attached.)
- SAA staff will develop a more robust “Advocacy” Web page that highlights the agenda, with appropriate links to discussion papers, calls for action, other organizations’ agendas, and additional information. See, for example, the advocacy Web pages of:
 - The National Humanities Alliance (<http://www.nhalliance.org/advocacy/issues/index.shtml>)
 - The Society for Neuroscience (http://www.sfn.org/index.aspx?pagename=gpa_issues)
 - The American Bar Association (<http://www.abanet.org/poladv/priorities/>)

We ask that the Council review the “Society of American Archivists Advocacy Agenda 2009 – 2010” below and provide input on the following:

1. Most importantly, are the correct issues addressed?
2. Please indicate the priority order for the issues.
3. Do you agree with the approach to framing of the broad issues?
4. Do you agree with the approach to framing of the specific issues? In each case, we would propose to provide an “SAA supports” statement along with a discussion paper. As appropriate, a “Call to Action” statement would also be developed (and updated as needed) to stimulate action by SAA members and other networks.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the SAA Council adopt the “Advocacy Agenda 2009-2010 (version 053109),” as drafted by the Government Affairs Working Group [and revised by the Council], as a working document that will be distributed to the SAA membership from June to August 2009 for comment and refinement; and

THAT a revision incorporating member comment be reviewed by the SAA Council at its August 10, 2009, meeting; and

THAT the Government Affairs Working Group develop a series of issue briefs, beginning with those Advocacy Agenda issues that are of the highest priority for member, policymaker, and public awareness, and submit those briefs for Council or Executive Committee review and comment as they are completed, with a goal of completing an issue brief for each issue identified in the Advocacy Agenda by the time of the May 2010 Council meeting.

Support Statement: Development and ongoing review and refinement of an advocacy agenda provides the Society with a means to organize its advocacy efforts, make conscious decisions about its priorities, frame its messages, work proactively on key issues, and respond quickly and effectively to policymaker and media inquiries.

Fiscal Impact: None.

DRAFT
Society of American Archivists
Advocacy Agenda 2009 – 2010

The Society of American Archivists has developed this Advocacy Agenda to ensure that attention is given to those issues that affect or support the critical role that archives and archivists fulfill in ensuring the preservation of an authentic American historical record and making it broadly accessible to the public.

The Public's Right to Equal and Equitable Access to Information

America's citizens have a right to know the actions of their government and the thoughts of their government leaders. Government at all levels should assume that the public has the right to any document prepared by government officials. Although in some instances national security, privacy legislation, or another intervening factor may make it necessary to withhold information from the public temporarily, it should be the obligation of all officials to declassify or otherwise release embargoed documents as quickly as possible.

[Link to specific legislative items or current issues, such as declassification of federal records.]

The Public's Right to Timely and Reasonable Use of Information

In 1790, America's first copyright act made published works freely available for public use after a maximum of 28 years. Today works do not enter the public domain until 75 years after the death of the author. A more appropriate balance must be struck between the right of authors to benefit personally from the fruits of their labor for a limited time and the right of the public to make use of material freely for the greater benefit of society.

[Link to specific legislative items or current issues, such as orphan works and Section 108 copyright revisions. See below for example.¹]

The Public's Right to Personal Privacy

A person's right to privacy has historically been balanced against the public's right to information. Personal privacy should be protected throughout an individual's lifetime in appropriate ways. Documents recording information about living Americans should be involuntarily disclosed only when disclosure accomplishes a greater public purpose.

[Link to specific legislative items or current issues.]

The Public's Need for a Comprehensive, Comprehensible American Historical Record

The actions of the government and people of this country cannot be documented accurately unless an authentic record is preserved of the critical individuals, events, and actions taken over time. To hold government accountable and to provide evidence of the diverse and complicated elements of the human experience, it is essential that concerted efforts are undertaken to preserve and make accessible a credible and reasonably complete historical account of government and other aspects of society.

[Link to specific legislative items or current issues.]

The Public's Need for Strong Institutional Stewardship of the American Historical Record

The records found in our nation's archives ensure administrative continuity, help hold government officials accountable for their actions, and create documentary sources through which we come to understand our society. Because of the importance of these functions, archival institutions at all levels of government and throughout society must be adequately funded. Funding should include both sufficient support for ongoing operations and opportunities (such as grants) for extraordinary funding to enable archives to preserve for the public unusual documentary opportunities.

[Link to specific legislative items or current issues regarding federal legislative authorization and funding, such as NHPRC and PAHR. See below for example.^{2]}

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¹ **Copyright:** Updating copyright and intellectual property laws to meet the challenges of the networked environment has been a key focus for Congress, the courts, and state legislatures for several years.

- **Orphan Works:** Many archival repositories hold literary and other manuscripts that may fall under the category of "orphan works," defined as those whose owners are difficult or even impossible to locate. SAA supports current efforts by the U.S. Copyright Office to address this issue.
- **Section 108 Revisions:** The Section 108 Study Group has provided recommendations on how to revise the copyright law to ensure an appropriate balance among the interests of creators and other copyright holders, archives, and libraries in a manner that best serves the national interest. SAA supports the recommendations of the Section 108 Study Group.

² **Federal Legislative Authorization and Funding:** The National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), other federal agencies, and the proposed Preserving America's Historical Record Act (PAHR) are sources of special

funding for archives that support innovative, and often collaborative, projects that help to establish best practices that can be fostered throughout the archives community.

- *NHPRC*: SAA supports reauthorization of NHPRC by the 111th Congress with a funding level of \$20 million. This funding level will ensure that the agency can adequately and appropriately support projects not only to preserve and make accessible nationally significant records, but also to serve as models of best practices for archives of all types.
- *PAHR*: The Preserving America's Historical Record Act (H.R. 2256) would create a federally funded formula grant program to provide essential resources to support and enhance the ability of state and local records sources to provide access to the "other half" of America's story – that, is, those significant records that are kept by sources other than the federal government. SAA supports authorization and funding of PAHR at \$50 million.



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Issues at a Glance

[National Endowment for the Humanities / National Historical Publications & Records Commission \(NHPRC\) / International Educational Programs / Teaching American History / Institute of Museum & Library Services](#)

National Endowment for the Humanities

We urge Congress to support \$75 million in new funding for NEH in the FY2010 Interior Appropriations bill, including: \$50 million for competitive grant programs and \$25 million for operating grants to state humanities councils.

NEH provides critical leadership for our nation's research and education infrastructure. The requested increase will:

- address significant, unmet needs throughout NEH core programs: Research, Education, Preservation & Access, Challenge Grants, Public Programs, Digital Humanities, and the Federal/State Partnership
- help offset severe economic pressures on the academic workforce and humanities institutions
- enable NEH to introduce or expand current support for:
 - global perspectives
 - innovative use of digital technologies
 - graduate education and research
 - data collection and dissemination of information on the state of the humanities

Click [here](#) for a pdf of the full NEH Issue brief.

National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC)

We urge Congress to support FY2010 funding of \$22 million, including: \$20 million for national grants, and \$2 million for essential staffing and program administration-related costs for NHPRC.

We also seek support for a five-year reauthorization (beginning in FY2010) for the NHPRC's grants program at the \$20 million level.

Click [here](#) for a pdf of the full NHPRC Issue brief.

International Education Programs

We urge Congress to significantly increase funding for HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays international education programs for FY2010. Investing in HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays is important to the national interest:

- Foreign language and international studies support national security
- Foreign language and international business education programs strengthen our economic competitiveness in the global market
- International education programs prepare Americans to flourish as citizens in a global society

Click [here](#) for a pdf that includes additional information on federal funding for international education programs.

Teaching American History

We urge Congress to fund the Department of Education's *Teaching American History* grants program at a level of \$120 million in FY2010.

- The TAH grant program improves our schools' quality of instruction in American history.
- TAH grants help local education agencies establish long-term relationships with community organizations, such as scholarly associations, higher education institutions, and state humanities councils.

Support the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

"An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future."

— NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES ACT OF 1965

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to support \$75 million in new funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, including: \$50 million for competitive grant programs and \$25 million for operating grants to state humanities councils.

NEH provides critical leadership for our nation's research and education infrastructure. The requested increase will:

- address significant, unmet needs throughout NEH core programs: Research, Education, Preservation & Access, Challenge Grants, Public Programs, Digital Humanities, and the Federal/State Partnership
- help offset severe economic pressures on the academic workforce and humanities institutions
- enable NEH to introduce or expand current support for:
 - » global perspectives
 - » innovative use of digital technologies
 - » graduate education and research
 - » data collection and dissemination of information on the state of the humanities

Funding Overview

NEH is funded at \$155 million in the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act (pending enactment). Historically, NEH has demonstrated the capacity to operate at much higher funding levels. In 1994 (prior to severe budget cuts), NEH was funded at \$260 million when adjusted for inflation. At its peak in 1979, NEH was funded at \$431 million in 2008 constant dollars.

Unmet Needs

Demand for humanities project support, as demonstrated by NEH application rates and feedback from the field, far exceeds funding available. In FY 2008, applications for NEH grants represented about \$420 million in requested funds. Approximately 16% of competitive, peer-reviewed project proposals were funded. This compares to a 26% funding rate for merit-reviewed projects at the National Science Foundation (NSF), an agency close to the NEH in its mission to strengthen education and research at all levels in its sector. Examples of critical, underfunded NEH programs include:

- fellowships for college/university faculty and independent scholars
- classroom curriculum and materials development
- preservation of historically-significant collections and resources
- digital humanities workshops for teachers and faculty
- public media projects in film, radio and television
- capacity-building challenge grants to humanities institutions

NEH grants support strengthened institutional capacity, jobs, and professional development for thousands

of scholars, educators, curators, librarians, public historians, museum professionals, filmmakers and others around the country.

Investing in the Humanities

- **ADVANCEMENT IN THE HUMANITIES IS CRITICAL TO OUR NATION'S WELL-BEING AND CONTINUED STATUS AS A WORLD LEADER.** Rapid globalization, economic crisis, and new challenges to our national security have heightened the need for a broadly educated citizenry.
- **THE HUMANITIES IMPART PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED BY ALL AMERICANS,** including reading, writing, language proficiency, critical thinking, moral reasoning, effective communication, historical knowledge, civic awareness, and cultural literacy.
- **THE HUMANITIES ARE INNOVATIVE.** Humanities scholars are using digital technologies to generate new knowledge, enhance access to works of enduring value, and improve classroom education at all levels of learning.
- **A RELATIVELY SMALL INVESTMENT THROUGH NEH YIELDS HIGH RETURNS.** NEH awards seed money for high-quality projects that leverage millions of dollars in non-federal support every year.

What are the humanities?

The humanities are those fields of study concerned with human experience, thought, and creativity. They span the subjects of history, languages, literatures, philosophy, the arts, religion, anthropology, and others. The humanities help us understand ourselves and the world we live in. They are prerequisites for vocational mobility, personal growth, and civic participation.

Background

Created as an independent federal agency by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Humanities is today the largest single funder of the humanities in the U.S. Awards go to nonprofit cultural institutions, such as colleges, universities, museums, archives, libraries, public television, and radio stations; and to individual scholars. NEH extends its reach through annual operating grants to state humanities councils located in every state and U.S. territory. NEH is funded through the Interior Appropriations bill.

National Endowment for the Humanities Annual Appropriations, FY 94 to Present (in millions of dollars)

FISCAL YEAR	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Budget Request	177.5	177.5	182.0	136.0	136.0	136.0	150.0	150.0	120.5	126.9	152.0	162.0	138.1	141.0	141.4	144.4
Appropriation	177.5	172.0	110.0	110.0	110.7	110.7	115.3	120.0	124.5	124.9	135.3	138.1	140.9	141.1	144.7	155.0*

*NEH is funded at \$155 million in the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act (pending enactment).

NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE Members & Supporters 2009

African Studies Association
 American Academy of Arts and Sciences
 American Academy of Religion
 American Anthropological Association
 American Association for State and Local History
 American Association of Museums
 American Association of University Professors
 American Comparative Literature Association
 American Council of Learned Societies
 American Dialect Society
 American Folklore Society
 American Historical Association
 American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works
 American Musicological Society
 American Numismatic Society
 American Philological Association
 American Philosophical Association
 American Political Science Association
 American Society for Aesthetics
 American Society for Theatre Research
 American Sociological Association
 American Studies Association
 Arizona State University
 Association for Asian Studies
 Association for Documentary Editing
 Association for Jewish Studies
 Association of American Colleges and Universities
 Association of American Law Schools
 Association of American Universities
 Association of American University Presses
 Association of Art Museum Curators
 Association of Art Museum Directors
 Association of Research Libraries
 Boston University Humanities Foundation
 Center for Research Libraries
 Center for the Humanities (University of Miami)
 Center for the Liberal Arts (East Carolina University)
 Coalition for Networked Information
 College Art Association
 Columbia University
 Cornell University
 Community College Humanities Association
 Council of American Overseas Research Centers
 Council of Independent Colleges
 Council on Library and Information Resources
 Dartmouth College
 Drew University
 Duke University
 Dictionary Society of North America
 Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities (University of California, Berkeley)
 Federation of State Humanities Councils
 German Studies Association
 Hall Center for the Humanities (University of Kansas)
 Harvard University

Heritage Preservation
 History of Science Society
 Imagining America (Syracuse University)
 Independent Research Libraries Association
 Institute for the Arts & Humanities (Penn State University)
 Institute for the Humanities (University of Michigan)
 Institute for the Medical Humanities (University of Texas Medical Branch)
 Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (University of Notre Dame)
 Linguistic Society of America
 Medieval Academy of America
 Middle East Studies Association
 Minnesota Humanities Center
 Modern Language Association of America
 National Association of State Universities & Land-Grant Colleges
 National Coalition for History
 National Communication Association
 National Council of Teachers of English
 National Humanities Center
 Northeast Document Conservation Center
 Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
 Organization of American Historians
 Phi Beta Kappa Society
 Popular Culture Association
 Regional Alliance for Preservation
 Shakespeare Association of America
 Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies (Princeton University)
 Simpson Center for the Humanities (University of Washington)
 Sixteenth Century Society and Conference
 Society for Cinema and Media Studies
 Society for Ethnomusicology
 Society for Music Theory
 Society for the History of Technology
 Society of Architectural Historians
 Society of Biblical Literature
 Society of Christian Ethics
 Stanford Humanities Center
 Syracuse University
 Texas A&M University
 The Council of the Humanities (Princeton University)
 The Franke Institute for the Humanities (University of Chicago)
 University at Buffalo (SUNY) Humanities Institute
 University of California, Santa Barbara
 University of California, Santa Cruz
 University of Iowa
 University of Maryland
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 University of Oregon
 University of Richmond
 University of Southern California
 Virginia Foundation for the Humanities

National Humanities Alliance

