



November 17, 2020

The Honorable John Kennedy, Chair
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Chairperson Kennedy:

The Society of American Archivists, which represents more than 6,000 professional archivists employed by governments, universities, businesses, libraries, and historical organizations nationally, **urges you to include funding of \$7 million for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in the draft FY 2021 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill.**

Surely you can agree that we must safeguard our nation's archives to ensure that we pass from one generation to the next the evidence of past events, our record of progress, and the values that we as a society uphold. NHPRC, which is the grant-making arm of the National Archives and Records Administration, is the *only* federal program whose specific purpose is to help us meet this national obligation by funding critical projects to preserve non-federal records.

The agency's program demonstrates an effective and efficient approach to ensuring that documentation of the nation's social, cultural, economic, scientific, and political experience is available to future generations. NHPRC grants require grantee institutions to contribute cost-sharing of at least 50%. This funding model not only ensures the grantee's commitment, but also encourages effective collaboration and operational efficiencies and acts as a stimulus to spur investments from the private sector as well as state and local governments.

NHPRC grants encourage innovation and creativity in advancing best practices in archives, developing new technologies that enhance electronic processing of and access to public records, and connecting citizens to their cultural heritage. Without NHPRC's leadership, Americans' understanding of our collective history and our ability to engage effectively in our democratic processes would be greatly diminished.

Strong bipartisan support for NHPRC has existed since its founding, and Congress has repeatedly rejected efforts to eliminate the commission. The current appropriation is barely adequate to support ongoing programs and to implement critically important digital initiatives. In fact, the FY 2020 budget of \$6.5 million is approximately the same as the \$6.43 million budget approved in FY 2010.

The archives profession faces significant challenges in preserving and providing access to our nation's records—and those challenges are growing daily. We urge you to support the appropriation of \$7 million for this small agency whose impact is so important for our shared cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Vagts".

Rachel Vagts
President, 2020-2021

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy P. Beaumont".

Nancy P. Beaumont
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Christopher Coons, Ranking Member