

REGIONAL ARCHIVAL ASSOCIATION CONSORTIUM

January 9, 2016
The Honorable Terry McAuliffe
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor McAuliffe,

On behalf of the Regional Archival Associations Consortium, which is composed of representatives from 43 multistate, statewide, and local archival associations, we ask that you remove further cuts to the budget of the Library of Virginia in your upcoming budget allocations for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Overseeing Virginia's local and state government archives, the Library plays a critical role in state and local government. The Library supports effective governance of the state by providing records management services, including providing public access to historical governmental records. Efficient management of state records saves taxpayers money, supports fiscal and legal accountability, and preserves the historical record of the State of Virginia.

Government records are especially important because they document the legal, financial, and historical foundation of the state and its citizens. An important asset in preserving the memory of Virginia, the Library holds and acquires collections that are foundational to preserving the history, culture, and people of the commonwealth, including the Governor's records. Since Virginia is one of the original 13 colonies, the collections not only document and preserve the state's history but the United States' early history as well.

The most recent 5% reduction to the operating budget of the Library resulted in the loss of 18 employees. As a result of these cuts, the Library's reading and research room hours were reduced from six to four days per week. With more than 200,000 visitors from across the world annually, the Library is one of the most visited cultural and historical attractions in your area. The closure of the reading and research rooms on Saturdays and Mondays effectively denies access to the records and impedes the work of researchers, especially for persons who are not able to attend the Library during regular working hours.

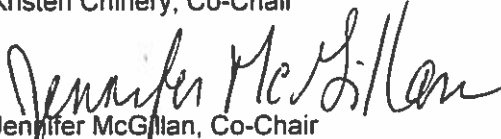
The closures will also increase response times for filling digital image orders; delay the fulfillment of internal and external records management requests; and increase processing time for new collections. These core functions of the Library directly support the ongoing work of state and local agencies.

The Library's budget has already undergone severe cuts, amounting to over 3.5 million dollars in the last nine years. The most recent cuts forced a reduction in staff and a decrease in open hours for the reading and research rooms. Further reductions will severely compromise the Library's ability to serve both internal and external patrons. The Regional Archival Associations Consortium implores you to please consider the importance of the Library, its work, and the history that it preserves, by removing further cuts to its budget in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Sincerely,



Kristen Chinery, Co-Chair



Jennifer McGillan, Co-Chair

Regional Archival Associations Consortium

CC:

The Honorable Dietra Trent, Secretary of Education

The Honorable Richard D. Brown, Secretary of Finance

The Honorable S. Chris Jones, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr. Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr. Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee