

SAA Council Statements Working Group

SAA Diversity Committee Annual Business Meeting
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When Does SAA Make Position Statements?

SAA will make a statement only on issues that are related directly to archives and archival functions, according to SAA's Criteria for Advocacy Statements; considerations include:

- Does the issue align with SAA's mission?
- Does the issue align with SAA's strategic priorities?
- Does the issue impact the practice of archivists?
- Can SAA meaningfully influence the issue?
- Is the issue in conflict with SAA's Code of Ethics?
- Does SAA have the expertise to speak on the issue?
- Does SAA have the resources available to support the issue?

Members may recommend that SAA take action on an issue by following Procedures for Suggesting SAA Advocacy Action

Genesis of the Working Group

At the November 2025 Council meeting, after the outcome of the 2024 election was known, we discussed planning for the future and how archives might be affected by the upcoming US presidency. We knew it would be rough, but we didn't know how rough.

In February 2025, after the dismissal of Dr. Shogan and the termination of probationary employees at NARA, SAA issued two statements. In the wake of this, there was a realization that federal executive branch actors would likely undertake more actions requiring a swift response from professional organizations. SAA needed a rapid response team -- thus, the creation of the Council Statements Working Group.

This has prompted us to (continue to) get into the advocacy mindset by monitoring federal and state actions, issuing calls to action, and partnering with allied organizations.

Recent Statements

- SAA Response to AOTUS Removal Urges Advocacy (February 25)
- SAA Condemns Firing of Archivists & Cultural Heritage Workers (February 25)
- SAA Statement on Media Reports Concerning Records Destruction (March 17)
- SAA Amplifies Calls from Allied Organizations to Defend IMLS (March 26)
- SAA Statement via NHA on NEH (April 3)
- SAA Statement on the Firing of the Register of Copyrights (May 19)
- SAA Letter on Historical Advisory Committee Representative Dismissal (May 20)
- SAA Calls on Our Members to Support Tribal Communities (June 9)
- SAA Statement on FY2026 NHPRC Funding (June 18)
- SAA Calls on Members to Advocate for Robust NARA Funding (June 26)

Impact

- Affirmation of SAA's mission to serve as a vital community promoting the value and diversity of archives and archivists.
- SAA's expertise lies in a very niche, but consequential area of public policy -- archives and records management. Our voice might be one of the few on a matter.
- Reaching broad audiences -- SAA's letter re the Dept. of State's Historical Advisory Committee made it to an international conference discussing how White House policies are affecting archives & our work.

Hi Derek, I'm in Brussels attending a conference on archiving the history of international organizations and international cooperation, and the historian who just gave a final keynote used your terrific letter on the Historical Advisory Committee in her presentation.



Challenges

- Even with dedicated Council attention to position statements, we have limited capacity to monitor and respond to events, and we have limits to our own knowledge, expertise, and experiences
- We, as a working group, sometimes disagree about what merits a statement, even within the guidelines of qualifies for consideration
- There are currently (and always) inherent challenges in a professional organization and the individuals associated with it making statements about events

Questions? Conversation?