

Society of American Archivists
Archives-Related Questions for 2020 U.S. Presidential Candidates
January 2020

The Society of American Archivists is a national professional organization that represents more than 6,000 archivists throughout the United States. Archivists are the professionals who are experts in managing archives—records on enduring value. They are educated and trained to preserve, organize, and provide access to these important materials in all formats.

From community institutions like public libraries and local historical societies throughout America to the National Archives' main facilities in Washington, DC, archives keep our stories as a public trust and make them available to all. Just as we protect our country's natural resources to sustain our way of life, we must also safeguard this nation's archives in order to strengthen democratic government and to pass down from one generation to the next our record of progress and the values our society upholds.

SAA's very active members are interested in knowing how you view certain archives- and records-related issues that archivists hold dear.

1. Management of Federal Records

SAA believes that the Executive Branch should support legislation and agency regulations that give the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) the authority and resources to investigate violations of records management laws and policies.

Further information: <https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/public-policy/legislative-agenda-and-action-plan/2019-2020#mgmt>

Do you support or oppose attempts to strengthen the records management authority of the National Archives and Records Administration? [support / oppose]

What actions would you take regarding the management of federal records across the Executive Branch?

2. Open Government Data, Records Classification, and Freedom of Information

SAA firmly believes that the critical nature of information in a democracy places the burden to prove the need for confidentiality, or the legitimacy of excluding public access to information, on those asserting such claims. SAA supports strengthening of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) implementation, especially through expansion to all federal agencies of the "Release Once Release to All" pilot project. SAA also supports efforts to improve declassification and strengthen the National Declassification Center, established by Executive Order 13526.

Further information:

<https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/public-policy/legislative-agenda-and-action-plan/2019-2020#opengovt>

<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-freedom-of-information-act>

<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-declassification-of-federal-records>

Do you support or oppose efforts to simplify and expedite the declassification of federal documents?
[support /oppose]

What actions would you take regarding the declassification of federal documents?

Do you support or oppose efforts to improve implementation of the Freedom of Information Act by agencies of the Executive Branch? [support / oppose]

What actions would you take regarding the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act by agencies of the Executive Branch?

3. Federal Funding for NARA

NARA requires sufficient funding to carry out its mandated functions, which include maintaining, preserving, and providing appropriate access to federal records held in trust for the public. SAA supports actions to increase appropriations for NARA.

Further information: <https://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-adequate-funding-of-government-archives-and-archival-programs> <https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/public-policy/legislative-agenda-and-action-plan/2019-2020#fedfund>

Do you support or oppose efforts to increase operational funding for the National Archives and Records Administration? [support / oppose]

What actions would you take regarding operational funding for the National Archives and Records Administration?

4. Federal Funding for NHPRC, NEH, and IMLS

Only three modestly funded federal agencies provide grants to support preservation of and access to archival materials for future generations: the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Each of these agencies has a distinguished history of supporting the work of archival repositories within academic institutions, local and state governments, museums, and public libraries. SAA supports increased funding for these agencies.

Further information: http://files.archivists.org/advocacy/Archival-Advocacy-at-Home-2019_Federal-Funding-for-Archives.pdf <https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/public-policy/legislative-agenda-and-action-plan/2019-2020#fedfund>

Do you support or oppose efforts to increase funding for federal programs that support the historical record, including the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services? [support / oppose]

What actions would you take regarding funding for federal programs that support the historic record beyond the immediate purview of the National Archives and Records Administration?

5. Intellectual Property Law and Regulations

SAA supports all efforts to reduce the term of copyright. SAA opposes any legislation or regulatory actions related to intellectual property rights that reduce or impede the ability of archives and libraries to preserve and provide access to archival materials. Such actions include extending the duration of copyright or changes to Section 108 of the U.S. Copyright Act that are not made specifically to expand permitted uses by archives and libraries.

Further information: <https://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-archivists-and-the-term-of-copyright> <https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/public-policy/legislative-agenda-and-action-plan/2019-2020#ip>

Do you support or oppose efforts to reduce the term of copyright in order to enable archives and libraries to provide public access to historical materials? [support / oppose]

What actions would you take regarding copyright policy?

6. Network Neutrality

SAA supports net neutrality in the United States and legislative proposals that would ensure that Internet providers are designated as common carriers under Title II of the *Communications Act of 1934*.

Further information: <https://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-net-neutrality>

Do you support or oppose legislation or regulatory actions to implement net neutrality in the United States? [support / oppose]

What actions would you take regarding net neutrality?

Please send your responses to the Society of American Archivists, Attn: Nancy Beaumont, Executive Director, nbeaumont@archivists.org. Thank you!

For more information: Society of American Archivists, 17 North State Street, Suite 1425, Chicago, IL 60602; 866-722-7858; www.archivists.org.