

Support Funding for the Humanities

April XX, 2007

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee to provide a \$36 million increase for the NEH in fiscal year (FY) 2008, returning the total funding for the agency to its nominal 1994 level of \$177 million.

With the relatively small amount of funding provided to the agency each year, the NEH provides important seed money for a wide variety of projects and programs including scholarly editions of the papers of historical and cultural figures, preservation of historically important books and newspapers, seminars and institutes for K-12 teachers and college and university faculty, major television documentaries, and educational museum exhibitions. The state humanities councils, in partnership with the NEH, reach millions of Americans each year in all states and most congressional districts through teacher institutes, literacy programs, programs on local history and culture, and support for local cultural and educational groups, community groups, and scholars.

The President's budget requests only \$141.4 million for NEH in FY 2008, roughly equal to the FY 2006 level, which would translate into a reduction of \$1.131 million for most of NEH's core programs, including Education, Preservation & Access, Public Programs, Research and Challenge Grants. We are aware of the many difficult choices your Subcommittee faces in crafting its FY 2008 bill, but we believe that strong support for the humanities is a crucial underpinning of our democracy. Increased funding is necessary to ensure that the agency is able to promote "wisdom and vision" by advancing the study and understanding of history, literature, art, foreign language, archaeology, philosophy and other humanities subjects throughout the United States.

Additional funds will allow NEH to sustain its core programs and extend the reach of its two major initiatives: the "We the People" program and the Digital Humanities Initiative. Both initiatives highlight the agency's ability to respond to educational and research needs within the country. The "We the People" initiative is a multi-faceted program designed to expand awareness and knowledge of American history and culture, and to enhance understanding of our civic institutions. The Digital Humanities Initiative, launched in FY 2007, offers grants to support the use of digital technologies in conducting research, conceptualizing relationships, and presenting scholarship.

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and urge you to support an increase in FY 2008 for the NEH.

Sincerely,