

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3304

"An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future." - National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965

March 5, 2010

Support Increased Funding for the Humanities

The Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee has advised us that a NEH funding increase is a programmatic request (not an earmark) and that co-signing this letter will not require a disclosure form.

Dear Colleague:

As co-chairs of the Congressional Humanities Caucus, we are writing to ask you to join us in sending the attached letter to Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Simpson of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to request increased funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for fiscal year (FY) 2011. The President's FY 2011 budget request of \$161.3 million represents a \$7.2 million, or 5.6%, cut to NEH program funds.

NEH is the single most important source of support for the humanities and plays a vital role in the preservation and promotion of our national identity. Many educational institutions and nonprofit associations – colleges and universities, to schools, museums, libraries, historical societies, state humanities councils, and other nonprofit organizations – use NEH grants to conserve and nurture America's heritage, bring the humanities to the community, and educate the next generation of Americans. Unfortunately, during the economic downturn, many educational institutions and nonprofit associations around the country are struggling to maintain continued access to high-quality programming and educational opportunities in the humanities.

Our ability to meet the challenges of today and the future depends on a solid foundation in the humanities. It is therefore critical that the federal government continue to invest in NEH. We are requesting **\$232.5 million for NEH in FY 2011**, a \$65 million increase over the FY 2010 enacted level, to bolster the national competitive grant programs as well as assistance to state humanities councils. This request would also support implementation of the President's Bridging Cultures initiative to enhance Americans' understanding of world cultures at home and abroad, and the Humanities Indicators project, a new online resource to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistical information on the condition of the humanities.

For more information or to sign onto the letter, please contact Kate Roetzer with Rep. David Price (5-1784 or kate.roetzer@mail.house.gov) or Lindsay Punzenberger with Rep. Thomas Petri (5-5406 or Lindsay.punzenberger@mail.house.gov). **The deadline to sign the letter is Tuesday, March 16.**

Sincerely,



David Price
Co-Chair, Congressional Humanities Caucus



Thomas E. Petri
Co-Chair, Congressional Humanities Caucus

The Honorable James P. Moran
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Simpson:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee to provide \$232.5 million to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, with \$144 million for NEH National Programs and \$60 million for the NEH Federal/State Partnership. This \$65 million increase over the FY 2010 enacted level would help offset mounting economic pressures on the academic workforce and humanities institutions, as well as strengthen the nation's infrastructure for humanities education and research for the long-run.

Even with the relatively small amount of funding provided to the endowment, NEH remains one of the largest and most important sources of support for sponsored research and other humanities activities in the U.S. Each year, NEH grants support strengthened institutional capacity, jobs, and professional development for thousands of scholars, educators, curators, librarians, public historians, museum professionals, filmmakers and others around the country. Their work is at the heart of efforts to preserve our nation's heritage, strengthen our civic institutions, bring humanities to our communities, and educate the next generation of Americans to address complex challenges in a globally competitive workforce.

Current demand for humanities project support far exceeds funding availability. Each year, as billions of dollars are rightfully invested in research and education in science and technology, the relative federal investment in the humanities falls further behind. In FY 2009, NEH awarded only 16.9% of all competitive project proposals (it received more than 4,000 projects for more than \$400 million), as compared to the 32% funding rate for merit-reviewed projects at the National Science Foundation. The requested increase would help close this gap by providing \$44.4 million in new funding for NEH National Programs, with \$36.9 million to increase the award rate for peer-reviewed project proposals to 25%, and \$7.5 million to support a new, competitively-awarded graduate-student faculty program.

State humanities councils work in partnership with the NEH to reach millions of Americans each year through teacher institutes, literacy initiatives, programs on local history and culture, and support for local cultural and educational groups, community groups, and scholars. A recent survey found that the councils would need an additional \$150 million to meet the need for programs and infrastructure support in their states. This request would provide councils with \$19.6 million for operating grants to expand their reach and address unmet needs.

Finally, increased funding would ensure full implementation of agency plans to enhance Americans' understanding of world cultures at home and abroad through *Bridging Cultures*, and to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistical information on the state of humanities through *Humanities Indicators*.

NEH did not receive any funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and unfortunately, the President's FY 2011 budget request of \$161.3 million represents a \$7.2 million (5.6%) cut to NEH program funds. We are aware of the many difficult choices your Subcommittee faces in crafting its FY 2011 bill, but we believe that strong federal support for the humanities is needed now more than ever to preserve America's place as a world leader in education and innovation for all fields of learning. As the legislation that established the NEH forty years ago states, "An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future."

We appreciate your past support of NEH and urge you to provide a robust increase in FY 2011 funding for the endowment to advance the nation's study and understanding of history, literature, foreign language, and other critical fields.

Sincerely,