



National Humanities Alliance

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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REGARDING FISCAL YEAR 2007 FUNDING FOR THE
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

MARCH 16, 2006

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the National Humanities Alliance and its members, we are pleased to submit written testimony for the record in support of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The National Humanities Alliance respectfully urges Congress to support funding of \$156 million for FY 2007 for the National Endowment for the Humanities, an increase of \$15 million above the FY 2006 level and the President's request. We propose a proportional increase for program funds, which would yield approximately an additional \$13 million for the agency's core programs (Research, Education, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, Challenge Grants and the Federal/State Partnership) and an additional \$2 million for the *We the People* initiative. This funding will strengthen NEH's ability to support high-quality humanities projects throughout the United States.

The National Humanities Alliance is a coalition of more than 80 national, state, and local nonprofit organizations, including scholarly and professional associations; higher education associations; organizations of museums, libraries, learned and historical societies; state humanities councils; university-based and independent humanities research centers. The Alliance was founded in 1981 to advance the cause of the humanities by promoting the common interests of its members with regard to national policy and legislation affecting scholarly research and public understanding of the humanities.

Funding Background

While we are pleased that the President continues to voice support for the humanities, we are disappointed that the administration has recommended flat funding for the agency again this year. The President's FY 2007 budget proposal would cut funding for NEH grant programs by \$1.32 million to offset administrative salary and overhead cost increases. We are deeply concerned about the gradual erosion in funding experienced in recent years for the agency's core programs.

We recognize that Congress continues to face difficult choices this year, and are asking the committee to recommend a funding increase for the agency of \$15 million. While this sum does not nearly meet the many needs for which the agency was created, it would make an impact, and help

ensure the long-term effectiveness of this agency and its core programs, which are critical to the civic life of our democracy. The long-term impact of inflation on the agency raises additional concerns about its ability to carry out the mandate for which it was established. The funding table below illustrates the decline, both in nominal and constant dollars, in the agency's spending levels.

Table: NEH Appropriations, FY 1970-2006 (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	2005	2006
Nominal \$	8.9	79.1	150.1	139.5	156.9	172.0	115.3	135.3	138.1	140.9
Constant \$ (2005)	44.1	284.2	351.9	250.4	231.9	218.1	129.3	138.4	138.1	136.3

Note: 'Nominal' values are the amounts appropriated by Congress. 'Constant' values (expressed in 2005 dollars) are adjusted for inflation according to the annual CPI-U data. The estimated inflation rate for 2006 is assumed to be the same as in 2005.

The NEH at 40

Over the last four decades, NEH has promoted "wisdom and vision" by advancing the study and understanding of history, literature, art, language, archaeology, philosophy and other humanities subjects, throughout the United States. With the relatively small amount of funding provided by Congress to the agency each year, the Endowment provides important seed money for projects and programs including scholarly editions of the papers of historical and cultural figures, preservation of historically significant books and newspapers, seminars and institutes for K-12 teachers and college and university faculty, major television documentaries, and educational museum exhibitions. Since 1965, NEH has awarded more than 63,000 grants. Highlights of this agency's important work include:

- 17 Pulitzers, 25 Peabodys, and 16 Emmy awards for NEH-supported books and documentaries
- Preserving our history through the cataloging of nearly 300,000 unique titles and microfilming more than 70 million pages dating from the early days of the republic
- Leveraging \$2 billion in non-federal funds distributed to humanities institutions and organizations
- Supporting the preservation of over 36 million archaeological, ethnographic, and historic objects since 1990
- 3 million Americans participating in NEH-supported library and reading discussion programs each year

After forty years, the NEH remains a relevant and important agency serving and strengthening this country by promoting excellence, understanding and learning in the humanities.

Quick Response to Disaster

On September 7, 2005 the National Endowment for the Humanities announced that it would make at least \$1,000,000 available for hurricane relief to areas of the Gulf Coast affected by hurricane Katrina. Since that announcement, NEH has awarded over \$730,550 for 25 projects to organizations in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama by reallocating existing funds. Recipients of these emergency "Chairman's grants" include:

- *Tougaloo College*- sealing and waterproofing collections in the L. Zenobia Coleman Library that includes papers, oral histories and memorabilia related to the lives and work of Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- *Beauvoir*- artifact salvage and restoration of the Jefferson Davis Home
- *New Orleans Notarial Archives*- rescue and stabilization of all contracts between individuals in New Orleans between 1734 and the present, including property sales, marriage contracts, wills, building contracts, acts of incorporation, partnerships, and inventories
- *Louisiana State University*- assisting several smaller institutions with recovery, conservation and storage of archives, including those from the Louisiana State Museum Jazz Archives, the New Orleans Archdiocese Archives, numerous historical records from small churches that no longer exist in New Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes, archival records of St. Bernard Parish's only newspaper, and the photographic archives of the New Orleans Port Authority

NEH continues to quickly and efficiently review grants for hurricane relief in order to preserve and protect the precious buildings, documents, books, artifacts, recordings, and artwork of the Gulf Coast integral to the region's history and culture. The National Humanities Alliance commends NEH for its swift action and decision to reallocate much needed resources to the Gulf Coast states.

Core Programs

The NEH core programs are at the heart of federal involvement in the humanities. It is through these programs that Americans gain a better understanding of our history, culture and the world we live in.

Research- Fellowships and grants from the Research division of NEH are among the most coveted and prestigious awards for scholars. The division gives awards for individual fellowships and summer stipends, as well as collaborative research projects. NEH-supported research frequently results in published books and articles. The Research division continues to encourage grant seekers to digitize and publish online their scholarly editions, furthering their reach. Grants for scholarly editions enable scholars to prepare texts and documents in order to make them more accessible to the general public for further study and research. Recent grant topics from the Research division include the evolution of the law school as a part of the changing legal profession and the rise of the modern university, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, and *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*.

Education- Education is at the center of the NEH's mission. The Education division strengthens teaching and learning of the humanities through all grade levels, from kindergarten to graduate level education. It does this through its Professional Development and Teaching & Learning Resources programs. These programs enable teachers and students to study and seriously explore topics in history, literature and culture in a unique way and help educators stay well versed in their subject areas. The Landmarks of American History & Culture Project offers a series of workshops for K-12 and community college teachers at important historical sites across the U.S. This year's workshops are in Virginia, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Florida, Michigan, Connecticut, Tennessee, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Idaho, Massachusetts, Wyoming, Ohio and Kentucky.

Preservation & Access- The recent events in the Gulf Coast underscore the importance of this division within NEH. The Preservation & Access division strives to preserve and increase the availability of resources important for research, education and public programming in the

humanities. These resources include books, journals, newspapers, manuscripts and archival collections, maps, photographs, films, sound recordings, oral histories, and objects of material culture. NEH works with libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations to preserve these resources and supports the creation of databases, dictionaries, atlases and encyclopedias to increase access to them.

Public Programs- It is through NEH- funded public humanities programs that the endowment works most directly with the American public. From traveling exhibits in local museums and libraries to film, television and radio productions, NEH public programs reach literally millions of Americans each year.

Federal/State Partnerships- The National Endowment for the Humanities Federal/State Partnership is a collaborative effort of the NEH and the fifty-six state humanities councils. State humanities councils are nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations governed by volunteer boards of directors, and the Partnership works to ensure that they are strong and capable of delivering high-quality humanities programs. Every federal dollar that a council receives is matched equally by local contributions of cash, goods, or services.

Challenge Grants- The Challenge Grant program helps local, state and national institutions secure their humanities resources and activities for the long term by encouraging them to become active in fundraising as a means of building permanent resources for the future. Possible grant uses include: Establishing or augmenting an endowment to pay for humanities staff and programming, renovation or construction of facilities, purchase of capital equipment, upgrade of technology, additions to library holdings, preservation of existing collections. Organizations that have benefited from Challenge Grants include: museums, tribal centers, libraries, colleges and universities, scholarly research organizations, state humanities councils, public radio and television stations, historical societies and sites. Each grant requires that first-time recipients match every federal dollar with three nonfederal dollars; recipients of subsequent awards must raise four nonfederal dollars for every federal dollar. A recent recipient of an NEH Challenge Grant is the National Constitution Center (NCC) in Philadelphia. The NCC received an offer of \$500,000 from NEH, which will match \$1,500,000 in nonfederal donations. The NCC will use these funds to help build a new gallery for educational exhibits illustrating various aspects of the Constitution. With NEH's support, The National Constitution Center will continue to provide contemporary relevance for the study of the U.S. Constitution, democracy and American history.

Special Initiative: We the People- In 2002, the National Endowment for the Humanities launched *We the People*, a major agency-wide initiative that is designed to encourage and enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture. The initiative consists of special projects NEH sponsors directly and grants made through the agency's program divisions. To date, more than 300 projects throughout the agency's core programs have received funds appropriated for *We the People*. NHA is pleased that the administration has continued funding for this program in FY 2007.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We appreciate the support of this committee for our nation's cultural and intellectual resources through the National Endowment for the Humanities.