

ADE Federal Policy Committee Report

October 2004 Introduction:

During this year, as has been the pattern in the past, there were plenty of issues for the Federal Policy Committee to work on , including a full blown emergency on the NHPRC appropriations front. As of this writing, most of the issues that have been worked on have been are still left hanging.

I cannot say enough about the importance of the National Coalition for History (NCH) and the National Humanities Alliance (NHA). Our working relationship with the staffs (Bruce Craig, John Hammer, and Jessica Jones) of these two organizations has been tremendous and they have supported our issues with vigor, intelligence, and political savvy. Our ADE investment in these advocacy groups is absolutely vital! **NEH:**

Humanities Advocacy Day (HAD): As has been the case since the inception of this advocacy day exclusively for the humanities spearheaded by the NHA, the ADE was a financial sponsor of the 2004 HAD and Charlene Bickford served on the HAD Steering Committee. We also provided a large number of participants (8 of 110) , given the size of our membership compared to that of other organizations. Though HAD focuses primarily upon the NEH, Bruce Craig of the NCH briefed participants on the NHPRC and Craig and Bickford put together an NHPRC briefing sheet for the packets. Participants were urged to visit Reps. and Sens. from their states who were important to the NHPRC appropriation to talk about the proposed funding cut.

Appropriation: The Federal Policy Committee also kept up with the NEH appropriations situation through the updates put out by the NHA. As of this writing, it

looks like the NEH appropriation will be increased by about \$5 million with most of the increase going to the “We the People” program. This should be good news, but see the next item.

Funding for Editions Program and the “We the People” Initiative: At the 2001 ADE meeting in Washington, NEH Chairman Bruce Cole delivered a very strong statement in support of editions as central to the core mission of the NEH and we were all encouraged. It was during the next grant cycle that the editions were split off from Collaborative Projects and Scholarly Editions again became a separate program within the Research Division. The 2002 cycle was a banner cycle for editions grants, particularly in the matching grants category. In 2003 the NEH began its “We the People” (WTP) initiative and received some funding for it. During that funding round several editions were designated as “We the People” projects and received some of their funding through “We the People,” but the total grants for editions declined by nearly 20%. In 2004 the NEH received a \$12 million increase for the WTP initiative and more editions were designated WTP projects and funded from those funds. Nonetheless the total grants for editions increased only around 1.5% from the severely decreased figure of the previous year. Some well established editions did not receive funding and several others received lower grants than in previous years. Thus, the WTP initiative has not meant any increase in the NEH’s overall commitment to editions--in fact that number has shown a troubling decline. In addition, the NEH Editions Program has now invited electronic proposals with no guarantee that additional funds will be available for this expansion of their program.

Bickford has been in communication with Esther Katz and Dennis Conrad

about a possible ADE approach to the NEH leadership about this problem. She has also emailed Kathy Toavs the fact that the new NEH editions program guidelines solicit proposals for conversion of volumes to electronic formats without any guarantee that there will be an increase in funding for editions. The response to that email mentioned the hope for increased resources, but there was no guarantee. At this writing we're considering our options.

NHPRC:

FY2005 Appropriation: After a banner year in 2004 when the NHPRC's appropriation was \$10 million, the FY2005 appropriations process has been a struggle to try to prevent a disaster from occurring. The Administration's budget requested only \$3 million for the NHPRC and although the NARA Congressional Relations Officer assured Bruce Craig of the National Coalition for History that the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies would probably increase this number to \$8 million, the subcommittee marked the bill up without increasing the NHPRC number. In fact the subcommittee chair (Rep. Ernest Istook of Oklahoma) resisted all amendments to the Administration's budget numbers. In the days between the subcommittee and full committee markups, we scrambled to try to get an amendment introduced in the full House Appropriations Committee. ADE members in key states like Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts took action and the efforts produced some results. Phil Chase's organization of Virginians to enlist Rep. Virgil Goode to the cause was successful, and Goode, a huge budget "hawk," wrote the subcommittee seeking \$10 for the Commission. Thanks to Rich Leffler and

others, Rep. David Obey of Wisconsin, the ranking member of the full committee, even agreed to let an NHPRC amendment come up in the full committee (he too was opposing all amendments but for different political reasons than the subcommittee chair). Bickford managed to recruit long time NHPRC supporter Rep. David Price of North Carolina to propose an amendment raising the number to \$6.5 million and her Congressman, Rep. James Moran of Virginia, to second Price. But unfortunately the subcommittee chair firmly opposed any amendments and the Price/Moran amendment was withdrawn with a request that it be considered when the conference on the bill was held.

Over the month of August, working with together with the NCH, AHA, OAH, COSRHC, NHA, AASLH, and the SAA, we recruited people to make contacts to the members of the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and General Government Appropriations in early September, when Congress returned from the long Convention/summer vacation recess. That effort was underway when we heard that the Senate subcommittee had marked up earlier than anticipated and with only a \$3 million figure late on the Thursday after Labor Day. The full markup was scheduled for Tuesday, and in the small block of time that we had available we did everything that we could think of. Our plea was for the full committee to increase the NHPRC number. We had to get a different number from the Senate than the House number so that the figure would be conferenced. If not, the Senate full committee markup would be end of the fight. By Monday we were hearing that the committee was beginning to feel the pressure, and we kept it up right until the mark up. The good news came from Senator Byrd's office that the Senate figure would be \$5 million--still nowhere near enough, but an improvement.

Ray Smock, Charles Cullen, Allida Black, Rich Leffler, Leslie Rowland, and other ADE members were key players in this drama.

At this writing there are major issues over transportation funding and the final resolution Transportation, Treasury, and General Government Appropriations Bill has been put off until at least after the election, and maybe early 2005. There is still hope that we can get a better figure (\$6.5 million is what we are aiming for) if and when there is a conference. The best of all possible worlds would be another year continued at the 2004 funding levels, but that seems unlikely.

NHPRC Strategic Plan:

At its May 2004 meeting the NHPRC passed a new strategic plan (attached). There was no constituent input into this plan and little discussion at the Commission meeting. Executive Director Max Evans described it in an email to Bickford as follows:

“Instead of a "strategic plan" that tried to cover every contingency, the Commission, in the interest of making us more nimble and able to respond more quickly to changing conditions, adopted a plan that consists of a Mission, Vision, and Goals. We will leave specific objectives and priorities for the Commission to set annually.

You will see that the plan is pretty conservative: we continue our commitment to all of the activities we now undertake, with only minor tweaking. But we added a Goal that would involve the Commission more in a policy role, in addition to a

grants-making role.

Since the Guidelines published a couple of years ago are still valid until Sept. 2005, we are gradually making a transition to the new plan. When its complete, we will not have hard copy published guidelines, but publish announcement for each grant category, with the specific requirements for each. The announcements will be consistent with new regulations that we will be writing in the next year. An advantage of this approach is that changes, especially to objectives, can be made in response to changing needs expressed by the grantee community, as well as the wishes of other stakeholders.”

Editors should find it disconcerting, to say the least, that editions are not even mentioned in the plan and that the Commission could set new goals and priorities every year. It is difficult to predict what will happen under this plan, but it is clear from the initiatives reviewed below that the current Executive Director has big plans for the future of the NHPRC. Traditional book editions do not come up as a high priority. We need to track what happens under this plan very closely.

Taking Care of Our Cultural Heritage (formula grants proposal): This effort on the part of numerous organizations led by the AASLH and the SAA resulted from a phone call from Max Evans to Terry Davis, Executive Director of the AASLH. He suggested that the federal support for libraries through IMLS “formula” or block grants to the states has given libraries increased resources, making it possible to plan,

implement those plans, and have an organized constituent base. His idea was that a similar program could be created for archives and that this plan would not just be a way to provide increased resources for local archives but also help to stimulate state spending on archives because of a matching requirement.

The AASLH and SAA took up this idea, and then it somehow morphed into an archives/**museums** “formula” grants program. When they sent out an initial concept draft of a \$100 million program and began to form a working group, we got wind of this movement. Esther Katz wrote to Terry Davis pointing out that the ADE should be included in the discussions and that editions should be part of any proposal that was designed. Bickford attended the first meeting of the working group, representing roughly two dozen organizations and government agencies. When asked about anything that would be a “deal breaker” for the ADE in terms of supporting (or remaining neutral on) this effort, she stated that the first \$10 million of any year’s NHPRC appropriation must be reserved for the **national** programs of the NHPRC or we would oppose this effort and that support for documentary editions at the local level should be part of any formula grant program. In his response to the same question, Max Evans seconded what Bickford said. In a subsequent one on one meeting with Bickford, Evans reiterated this position. He also stated that he believed that when the NHPRC’s appropriation reached \$20 million, with \$10 million for the national programs and \$10 million for the “formula” grants, then 10% of appropriations above \$20 million should go to national programs. Regardless of this assurance, this whole effort needs to be watched very closely. Dennis Conrad has agreed to assist with the surveillance duty and he has all of the paperwork

produced to date. Given the current appropriations climate in Congress, there seems to be little chance that this effort will go far unless some powerful congressional sponsors are found. And, of course, given the cuts in archival programs at the state level in recent years, any funding would not even replace the funds that have been cut.

Electronic Center Proposal: As a result of the discussions held at the ADE's conference on electronic editions last November, the ADE submitted a follow up proposal to the NHRPC. This proposal was rejected at the May meeting of the Commission. During January and February Charles Cullen was on a sabbatical in Charlottesville and had discussions with Daniel Pitti, the director of the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) at the University of Virginia. Both Cullen and Max Evans were seeking progress on a concept advanced by one of the working groups at last November's conference for a digital center for documentary editions. Pitti was encouraged to submit a proposal to the NHRPC for consideration at the November 2004 meeting. Cullen sent a copy of a draft of a proposal from IATH to do a feasibility study for a "Digital Center for Historic American Records and Publications" to Bickford in July and she and Cathy Hajo both responded to the proposal. A new draft of the proposal, which Bickford has not seen at this writing, is circulating among NHRPC staff. Another issue still up in the air! **NCH and NHA:**

The ADE is currently a rotating member of the Policy Board of the National Coalition for History. Esther Katz is our representative. Bickford attended the January meeting of the Policy Board in Washington for the ADE and Katz attended the meeting at the OAH. The NCH currently has excellent leadership under Bruce Craig. Bickford

attended the annual meeting of the NHA in Washington. The NHA is going through a transition with John Hammer's retirement at the end of this year. The search committee's difficult search for a replacement for John has led them to make an interesting proposal involving a partial merger of the NCH and the NHA which is Boards of both organizations. **Summary:**

This year has been a difficult one, but as always, both the ADE leadership and its members have been there to help out in every way possible. Our joint sense of purpose and everyone's willingness to fight these battles again and again makes the job of the Federal Policy Committee easier. Special thanks to ADE presidents past, present, and future: Beth Luey, Esther Katz, and Dennis Conrad.

Charlene Bickford for the Federal Policy Committee Theresa Collins Stan Katz Ann Gordon Leslie Rowland Barbara Oberg Ira Berlin Charles Cullen, ex officio October 5, 2004

Attachments: NHPRC Strategic Plan Taking Care of All Our History (start up document

sent out to participants in

Washington meeting

Mission

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) promotes the preservation and use of America's documentary heritage essential to understanding our democracy, history, and culture.

Vision

America's documentary heritage preserves the rights of American citizens; checks the actions of government officials; and chronicles the national experience.

Democracy demands an informed and engaged citizenry. By preserving our

documentary heritage and promoting its distribution and use, the people seek to guarantee the protection of the rights of all, hold accountable government and other public institutions, and increase understanding of our history and culture for generations to come.

The NHPRC is a public trust for documenting democracy.

Goals

Within the National Archives and Records Administration, the NHPRC has a unique role to:

1. 1. Exercise leadership for public policy in the preservation of and access to America's documentary heritage
2. 2. Expand the distribution of the most important traditional documents in American history
3. 3. Promote a national network for state and local documentary preservation and utilization efforts
4. 4. Support institutions that promote preservation, dissemination, and use of historical records
5. 5. Support institutions in meeting the challenges of preserving and managing electronic documentation
6. 6. Support education and training of professionals engaged in preservation and dissemination

AASLH

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Taking Care of All Our History A Proposal to Increase Federal Support for State and Local History Organizations

History connects people to community—whether the community is a neighborhood, a city, a state, or a nation. History is essential to our democracy, a key to education, and an economic driver, whether the goal is attracting heritage tourists or creating places where people want to live, work, and play.

Our democratic form of government relies on a public grounded in knowledge of our nation's past and

skilled at using that knowledge to make reasoned decisions about our nation's future direction. It is our commitment to keeping honest records—archives—that preserves the rights of individuals and assures that governments and other institutions perform in the public interest.

Museums provide educators exciting ways to reach all children—especially those who do not respond well to traditional classroom activities. They open doors to wider worlds. They give residents, newcomers, tourists, and residents places where they can touch the past and learn about a particular place and time. They build community.

Our nation has recognized the importance of history by its support of national institutions—the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution. Yet much of the American record—evidence of births, education, marriage (and divorce), property held, obligations satisfied and criminal conduct—is held at the state and local level. Our state and local history organizations preserve the records that protect our rights. They hold the objects, buildings, visual images, and oral accounts that inspire our dreams. The programs of NHPRC and IMLS support some projects of larger state and local museums and archives. But there is relatively little consistent support for the places where adults and children, citizens, immigrants, and visitors have their most frequent contacts with history—state and local historical societies, museums, and archives.

These places offer children their first tangible contact with our nation's past. They introduce people of all ages to the documents and artifacts essential to understanding everything from family to community, to national history. (If you want to discover the roots of America's breakfast food industry, you have to go to Battle Creek.) They mirror the diversity of our nation. They are our most effective tools in helping people make the leap from personal history and heritage to understanding national history.

If we fail to engage people in history on the local level, we will continue to find it difficult to engage them in the nation's story. If our nation fails to preserve state and local records, we will fail to protect and serve the citizens of our democracy.

It is time to establish a national program to ensure that all of America's archives and museums continue to collect and share all our history—stories too diverse and too numerous to ever be housed, cared for, and shared only in national institutions—history that protects our rights and takes people from fascination with their personal past to understanding of their shared community and national history.

What Would the Program Look Like?

AASLH envisions a two-pronged federal/state partnership program making funding available through designated state partners. The federal partners would be the Institute for Museum and Library Services, handling museum and artifact-based programs, and the National Historic Publications and Records Commission, handling archival and document-or publications-based programs. Each would have separate enabling legislation and appropriations. The state partners would vary depending on local situations. The key would be to designate state partners with the capacity to determine local needs, stimulate excellence, promote access, foster creative collaborations, and administer sound, auditable programs.

Who Will Lead This Effort?

AASLH believes this program is possible if all of those who work in state and local history speak with one voice of the need and the proposed solution. That means a real collaboration with many leaders shaping the effort, energizing their members and constituents, and taking credit for our joint success. The American Association for State and Local History is volunteering to serve as the convener of the national, regional, and state organizations that need to join to lead this effort. The directors of IMLS and NHPRC have been briefed on the plan. We hope the list of lead organizations will include:

The Council of State Historical Records Coordinators
 The National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators
 The Society of American Archivists
 The American Association of Museums
 The State History Administrators Forum
 Regional and state museum associations
 The National History Coalition
 The Federation of State Humanities Councils
 The American Association for State and Local History

What Is the Envisioned Timeline?

November 2003-March 2004	Present the idea to the organizations and create a coordinating task force. Create and refine the “needs case statement”
March-December 2004	Work out the details of the “proposed solution”
January-March 2005	Solicit congressional sponsorship/leadership Draft enabling legislation Launch grass-roots legislative contact campaign Introduce enabling legislation Introduce into budget
December 2006	Celebrate our success

Steps Along the Way

September 2003: November 2003	AASLH Council agreed to support the initiative Presentation to State Historic Administrators Meeting Presentation to Association of Midwest Museums Discussion involving AAM and AASLH
February 2004	Joint COSRC, SAA, NAGARA discussion and brainstorming on the needs and proposed solution

Coordinating Task Force Members to Date

AASLH Sandra Clark, Director, Michigan Historical Center, and Terry Davis, President & CEO of
 AASLH COSHRC Kathleen Roe, New York State Archives