

ADE Federal Policy Committee Report

October 2005 Introduction:

To date 2005 has been an unusually busy year for the Federal Policy Committee. Last year's report referred to a "full blown emergency on the NHPRC appropriations front." But, as it turned out, that was a major overstatement--last year's appropriations struggle was just a warm up for this year's real emergency. The fight to save the funding for the NHPRC's grants program consumed the time, talent and energy of many ADE members.

Again this year, the work of both the National Coalition for History (NCH) and the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) has been vitally important. Our working relationship with the directors (Bruce Craig and Jessica Jones) of these two organizations continues to be exceptionally good, and they have been smart and politically savvy leaders in the fight to save the NHPRC and increase the funding for the NEH. Our ADE investment in these advocacy groups earns an excellent return!

PROPOSED NCH/NEH MERGER:

When John Hammer announced his retirement as director of the NHA in early 2004, the NHA Board began a search for a new executive director, which did not result in the selection of a new director. During their search process, they attempted to recruit Bruce Craig, who was unwilling to leave the NCH but suggested that there might be a way for the NCH and the NHA to merge and strengthen their operations. The NHA Board was very attracted to this idea, particularly because Bruce would have become the director of the merged organization. Although some early drafts of a merger proposal that

the NCH Board saw in mid 2004 seemed to have promise, the formal proposal from the NHA to the NCH was seriously flawed from the perspective of the NCH member organizations, particularly the archival and public history members. The ADE is one of only a few small organizations that are members of both advocacy groups and our vital interests have been well represented by both of them. Since the ADE has been on the NCH Board for the past two years as a rotating member, Esther Katz was involved in the beginning stages of this discussion. Esther could not go to the Seattle NCH Board meeting so Charlene Bickford served as the ADE rep. for the meeting where the NHA's proposal to the NCH was discussed. Before that meeting she had been approached by individuals from several other NCH member organizations with concerns about the proposal. They believed that the "merger" would mean their issues would get less attention and indicated that their organizations probably would not support the merged organization. She also attended a meeting of NCH member organization reps. that Bruce Craig called to discuss the proposal before the Board meeting where many concerns were aired.

At the Seattle meeting the discussion made clear that most of the historical and archival organizations, while they agreed that the missions of the NCH and NHA had much overlap and that there were possible economies and opportunities to increase staffing involved in a merger, believed that the NHA's proposal as drawn up would subsume the NCH and that history/archives would have less political clout. There was also much concern that the NHA does not have a structure that allows it to act quickly on issues of immediate concern, as the NCH does on a regular basis. The NCH Board passed

a resolution calling for a joint committee of representatives from the two organizations to consider the merger and the issues that had been raised, and Bickford was one of the five NCH Board members appointed to this committee. She then attended two committee meetings, where it was unanimously determined that the merger should not go forward, but that the two organizations should continue to find ways to work together and share resources. The NHA Board then wisely chose Jessica Jones as Executive Director.

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 2005 HAD and Charlene Bickford served on the HAD Steering Committee. Again this year, ADE members participated at a higher level (13 of 120 participants) than virtually any other organization. This year HAD participants were provided with both a briefing and fact sheets on the NHPRC that Bickford and Craig put together. The fact that the NHPRC was zeroed out in the Administration's budget caused the elevation of this issue and participants were told that they should make sure that the NHPRC was covered in all their meetings. ADE members took part in several of the state delegations (Tennessee [Dan Feller], Virginia [Phil Chase, Ted Crackel], Indiana [Emily Hall], New Jersey [Amy Speckart, Terry Collins, Paul Israel], Maryland [Dennis Conrad], and California [Rega Wood]), advocating for both the NEH and the NHPRC. They were aided by leaders of other organizations (Lee Formwalt of the OAH, Arnita Jones of the AHA, and Peter Givler of the AAUP). In addition, a "national" team, led by Bickford and Princeton University's congressional relations officer Diane Jones, visited staff of the NHPRC's

app. subcommittees and some members of the subcommittees. For example Bickford was allowed to tag along with the Michigan group when they visited Rep. Knollenberg's (chair of NHPRC app. subcomm.) office. Some members of the national team also joined state groups that had meetings set up with NHPRC app. subcommittee members. In those meetings both issues were dealt with.

NEH:

Appropriation: The NHA was seeking a \$15 million increase for NHA programs this year and the Federal Policy Committee continued to work with the NHA in seeking this higher appropriation level. In addition to our participation in Humanities Advocacy Day, several NHA email updates and action requests to ADE members were sent out on sedit-1. As of this writing, it looks like the NEH appropriation will again be increased by about \$5 million with most of the increase going to the "We the People" program.

Funding for Editions Program and the "We the People" Initiative: Last year's Federal Policy Committee Report reviewed the situation with the NEH's funding for editions. In summary, the actual dollars granted by the NEH for documentary editions had been steadily declining at the same time that the Chairman of the NEH has been very high profile in showcasing the NEH's support for editions and numerous editions have been named as "We the People" projects. In addition, a new initiative for conversion of volumes to electronic format had been announced but no new resources had been committed to the editions program for this.

Unfortunately the NHPRC crisis has meant that not much attention has been devoted to the issue of editions funding within the NEH. Bickford did use the occasion of

an appearance by Bruce Cole and Sherie Harter at the NHA's board meeting in February to ask if they could provide a 2005 NEH budget broken down by programs. They responded that they don't know what the breakdown will be until after the panels have met.

After grants were awarded this spring, a request for information from editors about their results went out on sedit-l, but only editors of historical editions responded. No project received an increase in NEH funding; a couple reported receiving the same amount; three reported decreased funding; and three were not funded at all. In addition, two proposals for electronic conversion were reported as turned down. A revised version of last year's chart summarizing NEH funding for editions for the past several years is attached. The total funding was \$3,430,792 for editions (\$1,985,792 outright and \$1,445,000 in matching. Although the outright grants figure declined from the previous year, the total is higher than the figure for the previous year. If one subtracts the nearly \$300,000 grant for electronic conversion of the Winthrop and Adams Family papers, the amount granted for editions is less than the FY2004 number.

NHPRC:

FY2006 Appropriation: The struggle over the NHPRC's appropriation for FY2005 ended with funding for the grants program at \$5 million, \$2 million more than the Administration's budget request but only half of the NHPRC's FY2004 appropriation. Thus, FY2004 turned out to be a very difficult year for editions, which saw their NHPRC grants cut by 20% from the requested level, and the situation would have been much worse if the Commission had not reserved \$1 million in funding from FY2003 funds. As

has so frequently been the case, no new editorial projects were funded.

Last fall, a delegation made up of Bruce Craig of the NCH, Dennis Conrad, and Archivist of Maryland Ed Papenfuse went to meet with the OMB examiner last fall to try to convince her that a higher appropriation was necessary for the NHPRC. This examiner believes that the NHPRC is a program that NARA can't afford when the federal government's records needs are so great.

Unfortunately, we learned in February of this year that our efforts with the OMB had been unsuccessful, since funding for both the NHPRC's grants program and its administrative costs were zeroed out in the Administration's proposed FY2006 budget. Though the grants program had been zeroed out in all 8 Reagan Administration budgets, funding for staffing was never targeted before. Even before the facts were known, there were signals that the news would not be good, so before the budget announcement Bickford and Craig met with leaders from the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHR), SAA, NAGARA, and the AASLH who were in Washington for a meeting. A working task force was formed and task force members began to have regular conference calls and lots of email discussions about strategy and tactics. Saving the NHPRC's grants program became everybody's top priority. We agreed to seek \$8 million in grant funds and \$2 million in administrative funding. Each organization urged its members to act and kept them informed of developments. Many of the smaller archival and historical groups were enlisted in the battle as well. At the beginning of the 109th Congress the Appropriations committees were reorganized with fewer subcommittees. This placed NARA/NHPRC funding in a committee with a large and varied mission and few members who had any familiarity with our issues. The Chairmen and most of the

members of the subcommittees had not dealt with NARA/NHPRC before. The House Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, HUD, Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies Appropriations was our first target. ADE members and many others contacted members of the full Appropriations committee and asked them to write what are known as “member letters” to the subcommittee requesting funding for the grants program and staff. We were quite successful in this effort and several letters from both Democratic and Republican members went to the subcommittee. In addition, the newly formed House Humanities Caucus, chaired by Rep. David Price of North Carolina and Rep. Jim Leach of Iowa immediately committed to supporting the NHPRC and sent a letter to the subcommittee. Many ADE members worked on the subcommittee effort, but particular thanks go to Allida Black, Phil Chase, Ted Crackel, Barbara Oberg, Terry Collins, Paul Israel, Pat Holland, Linda Simmons, Dennis Conrad, Leslie Rowland, Beth Luey, Lynda Crist, Stan Katz, Rich Leffler and Sharon Stevens, along with Linda Kerber and Arnita Jones who represented the AHA and convinced Rep. Leach to take up the cause. After the deadline for the member letters we began another phase of influencing the subcommittee. The subcommittee set up an email address for all communications to the subcommittee from groups and individuals that wished to provide written testimony on issues before the subcommittee. Our task force worked on getting statements from organizations, University Presses, directors of archives and historical societies, university press directors, etc. and the end result was over 90 statements submitted. The committee staff told us that the statements on the NHPRC made up over 80% of all the statements that they received on their bill. During this period a “Dear Colleague” letter sponsored by the Humanities Caucus was circulated and signed by 47 members for submission to the subcommittee. A petition effort at the OAH meeting in San Jose netted nearly 1,000 signatures and these signatures were delivered to the subcomm. and its members on

Humanities Advocacy Day.

Agency hearings for the NARA budget were held in April 26 and the new Archivist of the United States, Allen Weinstein, testified for the first time. Dr. Weinstein had been sworn in two months earlier and used the occasion of his swearing in ceremony, which was attended by several Senators and Representatives, to voice his support for NHPRC funding and call the zeroing out a “tragic mistake.” At a more public ceremony televised to NARA employees across the nation, he made the same statement and said he would work to get the decision reversed. As soon as he was sworn in he began to make the rounds, visiting the key members of Congress. At the April 26 hearing, which was attended by 7 members of the committee (a very high number for such hearings), including the vice chair of the full House Appropriations Committee Ralph Regula, the Archivist’s prepared statement did not mention the NHPRC, but all except one member of the subcommittee brought the issue up in their opening statements and they all expressed concern about the zeroing out. Dr. Weinstein again stated that he thought it was a tragic mistake and spoke about the importance of the NHPRC to NARA. He stressed that he inherited the budget that he was before them defending. The hearing could not have gone better from our perspective, particularly since many in the audience were also there because of the NHPRC and some of us had a chance to talk with members of the committee after the hearing and clarify a few points. When the subcommittee marked up the bill in early June, they put in \$5.5 million for grants and \$2 for staffing. While this was a major victory, the figure for grants was still way too low from our perspective.

Although we had been contacting Senators and particularly the key App. Comm. Members before the bill passed the House, we stepped up our efforts after that point. In June various NHPRC supporters met with staffers for Sen. App. Comm. members. Bruce Craig and Bickford spent an entire day in June on this task, meeting with staffers for 7 Senators. The archivists also stepped up their efforts on the Senate side and an online petition with over 1,000 signatures was delivered to the key appropriations offices. Just after the 4th of July recess, the Senate subcommittee marked up the bill with \$5 million for the grants program and no funding for staffing, a disappointment, but not unexpected.

This bill has passed the Senate but has not yet been to conference. Our goal is to come out of the conference with the House numbers. **Taking Care of Our Cultural Heritage (formula grants proposal):** As a result of the NHPRC funding crises, this effort (described in last year's report) to draw up a plan for a grants program that would make "formula" or "block" grants to the states to address state and local records issues and to support making state and local documents more accessible, including publication in printed or electronic editions of the most important materials, was put on the back burner for most of the year. Nevertheless, representatives of archival organizations continued to work on this plan and had meetings with Dr. Weinstein about it. Neither the ADE nor the NCH were invited to these meetings. Bruce Craig, Dennis Conrad, and Charlene Bickford did meet with Kathleen Roe of COSHRC in early September before Roe and other archivists went to a meeting with Weinstein. We

expressed several concerns. First, the severe fiscal crisis that Hurricane Katrina has caused for the Federal Government argues against proposing new programs in 2006 for the FY2007 budget cycle. Second, the document that had been sent to us outlining the proposed program made no statement that the first priority is the national programs of the NHPRC and that the first \$10 million appropriated for the NHPRC must be reserved for the national programs. We also discussed using grants for hurricane recovery as a possible hook to get a pilot program started. Kathleen Roe agreed on everything we brought up, but as of this writing there has been no contact about the results of the meeting with the Archivist.

Electronic Center Proposal: Bickford is unaware of any progress on the proposal made by Daniel Pitti of the University of Virginia last year, but the University of Virginia Press did host a conference on electronic publication of editions attended by editors and press representatives for FF/FE editions and a group of 19th century literary projects. **Summary:**

This year has been an especially difficult one, but as always, both the ADE leadership and its members have been there to help out wherever they were asked. I wish that I could promise an easier time ahead, but it's clear that we're going to have to continue to wage the battles for support of editions year after year. Special thanks to ADE presidents past, present, and future:

Esther Katz, Dennis Conrad and Roger Bruns for their work on these issues.

Charlene Bickford for the Federal Policy Committee

Charlene Bickford, Chair Phil Chase Theresa Collins Linda Crocker Simmons Barbara Oberg Ann D. Gordon Richard Leffler Leslie Rowland Charles T. Cullen, ex officio (ADE NHPRC Rep.) Stanley N. Katz, ex officio (AHA NHPRC Rep.)

September 14, 2005

Attachments:

NEH Editions funding chart

NEH Editions Funding
FY2001—FY2005

Year	Applicants	# Funded	Outright	Matching	Total
2001 (last year in Collaborative)		20	\$2,282,818	\$1,318,500	\$3,601,318
2002 (first year of new editions program)	48	27	\$2,036,000	\$1,920,000	\$3,956,000
2003 (first year of WTP funds used for editions; those funds included)	47	16	\$1,715,000	\$1,470,000	\$3,185,000
2004 (\$12 million increase for WTP, funds used for editions included)	59	20	\$2,200,000	\$1,040,000	\$3,240,000
2005 (\$5 million increase for	71	21	\$1,985,792	\$1,445,000	\$3,430,792*

WTP, WTP funds used for editions included)

*includes an almost \$300,000 grant for an electronic conversion grant (new initiative within editions program); therefore the grants for actually creating

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

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

1717 CHURCH STREET • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203-2991 • 615 / 320-3203 FAX 615 / 327-9013

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:	AASLH Council agreed to support the initiative
November 2003	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