

# **ADE Federal Policy Committee Report**

**October 2008**

**Introduction:** This report looks back on another busy year for the Federal Policy Committee. While the same old familiar issues were dealt with, we also faced publicity about and a Congressional hearing on the Founding Fathers Projects (FFP), which presented a new area of both concern and possible opportunity. And, late in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, new legislation, H.R.3477, was passed that substantially increases the NHPRC's mission without any mention of funding to pay for the new programs. As had happened in the Administration's proposed budgets for FY2007 and FY2008, funding for both the grants program and staffing for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) was, quite predictably, zeroed out by the Bush Administration in its proposed FY2009 budget, and the fight to convince the Congress to restore the funding again consumed the time, talent and energy of many ADE members. In addition, groundwork for the necessary reauthorization of the grants program needed to be laid. Only a small increase in NEH funding was proposed by the Administration with the scholarly editions program funding slated for no increase.

Continuing our efforts begun with the new Democratic Congress in 2007, we worked to develop relationships with the leadership and staff of the relevant committees and found that the new Congress was more receptive to our issues than the previous one. Nevertheless, as this report is written, we are still awaiting a final resolution of the issue of FY2009 funding for both the NHPRC and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and it is clear that an NHPRC reauthorization will not be passed by the current Congress.

Before reviewing the year's advocacy activities, we'll provide some information about the ADE's relationship to our two major advocacy coalitions.

## **NCH and NHA:**

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 (Lee White and Jessica Jones) of these two organizations is strong, and they are very good about making sure that we are kept up to date on our issues and alerted to any crisis, breaking news, etc. They have both demonstrated themselves to be persistent, smart and politically savvy leaders in the battles to save the NHPRC and to increase the funding for both the NHPRC and the NEH. Our ADE investment in these advocacy groups continues to yield big dividends.

**NCH:** The ADE is a member of the NCH Policy Board. Bickford represented the ADE at the NCH Board meeting in Washington in January and Martha King ably represented us at the meeting in New York City in conjunction with the OAH convention. If Bickford is unable to represent the ADE at NCH Policy Board meetings, she recruits another Federal Policy Committee member or ADE member to represent us.

Bickford and Allida Black have worked closely with NCH Executive Director Lee White who has spent a large portion of his time working on NHPRC issues. He has continued to develop the NCH website, and his weekly newsletters provide brief announcements on recent stories with links to longer stories on the website. The site also has action alerts which allow a user to go to CAPWIZ, an electronic advocacy tool, and use it to send electronic messages to his/her Representative and Senators. And expanding the network of advocates is much easier with this tool as well. Bickford and Black are in frequent communication with White, who understands our issues. Unfortunately his time is stretched pretty thin and though he receives

some administrative staff support from the American Historical Association, the NCH remains essentially a one person operation.

**NHA:** Jessica Jones has been and continues to be a tremendous ally. Her work on the Hill in behalf of the NEH and her efforts to strengthen the NHA's participation by constituent groups and their members are making a difference. She has made the NHPRC a regular priority of the NHA and alerts Bickford and White to any issues that she sees or hears about that relate to documentary editing on the NEH front. Erin Smith of the NHA staff is in charge of Humanities Advocacy day and is also a big help to us. In turn we supply Jessica and Erin with information and all the support that we can give them. Bickford is currently serving on the steering committee for the NHA's Annual Meeting and the 2009 HAD.

**ADE support for NHA and NCH:** The ADE's substantial increase in our contributions to these two organizations its 2007 budget was money well spent and we thank the Council and membership for supporting these increases. The ADE should continue to increase its contribution level to the NHA and NCH and ensure that we always contribute to the NCH at the level required to maintain a seat on the NCH Policy Board. We should consider increasing its annual contributions to these two organizations each year by some percentage or amount more than the annual increases requested by the executive directors. In 2008, in addition to their usual work, the staff of both of these coalitions tracked the Founding Fathers Papers issue all year and kept us informed of any developments they saw or heard about. The directors of these two organizations both spend a substantial amount of their time and resources on our issues. Perhaps more than any other organization, our members and editing projects benefit from their work.

**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 2008 HAD and Charlene Bickford served on the HAD Steering Committee. The annual meeting of the NHA and the training for HAD both were held at George Washington University, where Bickford served as the University sponsor. Again this year, a core group of ADE members participated, including Bickford, Black, Dennis Conrad, Barbara Oberg, Mary Jo Binker, and Bill Ferraro. HAD participants were provided with both a briefing and fact sheets on the NHPRC that Bickford and White had put together. The fact that the NHPRC was again zeroed out in the Administration's budget made the issue urgent and all HAD participants were told that they should make sure that the NHPRC was covered in all of their meetings. ADE members took part in several of the state delegations advocating for both the NEH and the NHPRC and/or the "national" NHPRC led by Bickford and Lee White. They were aided by leaders of other organizations who also advocated NHPRC funding on their visits. All participating ADE members spent at least part of their day with the NHPRC national team, visited staff of the NHPRC's appropriations subcommittees and the offices of some members of the subcommittees. This team was supplemented with other ADE members as they were available. Some members of the national team also joined state groups that had meetings set up with NHPRC app. subcommittee members. In those meetings both the NHPRC and the NEH were dealt with.

**NEH:**

**Appropriation:** For the third year in a row the Administration requested level funding for the NEH. NHA again decided to work for a \$36 million increase (from \$141 million to \$177 million) to be allocated across the NEH's programs to restored NEH funding to its FY1994 actual funding level—not adjusted for inflation! Though both the House Interior Appropriations

Subcommittee chose to recommend an increase of \$15 million for FY'2009, this appropriations bill made no further progress due to issues relating to oil and gas leases. At the present time, the NEH is level funded through the end of March 2009.

Nearly the entire federal government is currently operating on a continuing resolution which expires at the end of November. The President has threatened to veto nearly every appropriations bill, which has stalled the entire process.

**Issues Related to the Scholarly Editions Program:** Last year's Federal Policy Committee Report reviewed the situation relating to the NEH's funding for editions and the potential impact of the Digital Humanities Initiative on ongoing projects and discussed the ADE's approach to the Chairman of the NEH on these issues, including the concern that elimination of outside review of proposals could have a negative impact. There has been no change in the status of these issues since our last report. In the Spring 2007 grant cycle, the total amount granted for editions was \$551,869 less than in FY2006 (see attached chart). There were several ongoing editions that were not funded and, as was true in the previous cycle, the impact was particularly hard on the projects documenting the lives of women. Since no list of applicants is available, our evidence relating to rejected projects is strictly anecdotal, depending upon which project directors reported to us that they applied for, but did not receive, a grant. There does not seem to be any evidence that projects were rejected because of the fact that they lacked a digital component, but it is possible that the NEH simply postponed the application of the digital requirement that was announced in the late summer of 2006, to the next grant cycle because of the reaction to its announcement so close to the application deadline.

**NHPRC:**

**FY2008 Appropriation:** The struggle to restore funding for the NHPRC's grants program after the Administration zeroed it out in its FY2008 proposed budget, resulted in \$7.5 million for grants and \$2 million to continue the NHPRC staffing. This was a very welcome two million increase over the previous year's funding after several years of very tight budgets and stopped the erosion of funding for editions for FY'08. In the FY2009 appropriations process, the House had voted for \$10 million in grants and the Senate figure was \$8.5 but the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill never was completed. Therefore, the NHPRC is operating at the \$7.5 million level for grants under the six month continuing resolution that Congress passed.

**NHPRC Reauthorization:** The current authorization for the NHPRC's grants program

**PAHR:** On May 14, 2008 a bill (H.R. 6056) was introduced to create a grants program within NARA for the Partnership for the American Historical Record (PAHR—see <http://www.statearchivists.org/issues/pahr/index.htm>). This bill resulted from a new strategy adopted by the archival community that separated the PAHR concept from the NHPRC. The archival community had not given us or Lee White any heads up that this new legislation was in the works. The archival community did continue to cooperate on and work for NHPRC grants funding. There has been no progress on H.R. 6056

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.)

## NEH Editions Funding

### FY2001—FY2006

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 WTP, WTP funds used for editions included)	71	21	\$1,985,792	\$1,445,000	\$3,430,792*
2006 (WTP funds used for editions included)		21	\$2,570,000	\$1,666,869	\$4,236,869**
2007 (WTP funds used for editions included)	59	20	\$2,397,000	\$1,288,500	\$3,685,000

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

\*\*Though this figure is substantially larger than the previous year's ongoing historical editions did not fare well in the process.