

Federal Policy Report to the Association of Documentary Editors
June 15, 2015

Humanities Advocacy Day 2015: As has become our tradition, the turnout of ADE members for the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) Annual Meeting and Humanities Advocacy Day (HAD) was good, though not as high as in previous years. We appreciate the time and efforts of the at least 7 ADE members who participated—Charlene Bickford, Mary Jo Binker, Chris Brick, Thomas Dulan, Adrina Garbooshian, Benjamin Huggins, and Neal Millikan. The ADE was represented in the Rhode Island, Virginia, Illinois, and Missouri groups, as well as the NHPRC group. We also appreciate the fact that individuals like Kathy Finley of the OAH, Robert Vaughn of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Fred Winter of F. A. Winter Associates and Megan Moore of the National Communication Association advocated for the NHPRC in their meetings.

The programs presented at the NHA meeting provided us with excellent examples of relevance and usefulness of humanities education, public programs in the humanities, and humanities research. We all received training in making a strong and reasonable case for the continuation of, and even increased federal funding for the humanities in this period of shrinking budgets.

On HAD the NHPRC advocacy group was composed of ADE members Bickford, Binker and Millikan. We met with staffers for two representatives who serve on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government — Rep. Mike Quigley (R-Ill.) and Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS). The NHPRC group also had an unscheduled meeting with Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA). All the meetings were cordial and the staff, while noncommittal, seemed supportive of the NHPRC request for \$5 million for FY2016.

NHA/HAD Summary: We urge ADE members to start planning now to participate in the NHA meeting and HAD 2016 (scheduled for March 16-17, 2016). The NHA annual meeting is both intellectually stimulating and good training for HAD, but if you can't make both, HAD is the most important one to attend. Congressional visits and other contacts from knowledgeable and articulate spokespersons for the programs of the NEH and NHPRC are extremely important in making the Congress and staff aware that these two small, but effective entities have wide-ranging positive impact. We also urge ADE members to encourage their congressional representatives to join the Congressional History Caucus. The purpose of the caucus is to provide a forum for members of Congress to share their interest in history and to promote an awareness of the subject on Capitol Hill. To learn more about how to urge congressional representatives to join the caucus, go to <http://historycoalition.org/congressional-history-caucus/>

NHPRC Appropriations

FY2015: The Obama Administration requested \$5 million for FY'15, a \$500,000 increase over the FY2014 level of \$4.5 million and the same level as FY2012. Congress approved this request.

FY2016: The Obama Administration requested \$5 million for FY2016, the same level of funding as FY2016. The House Appropriations Committee approved the \$5 million figure despite the fact that its Financial Services Appropriations Subcommittee had initially proposed cutting the funding to \$3 million. Lee White, legislative director for the National Coalition for History, was instrumental in getting the subcommittee to restore the full funding.

To find up-to-date information on how to contact members of the House and Senate subcommittees on Financial Services and General Government appropriations and their staffs go to: www.contactingthecongress.org

NEH Appropriations

FY2015: NEH is at its lowest funding level in constant dollars since 1971. For FY2015 the Obama Administration requested level funding of \$146 million for NEH, the same amount as the agency received in FY2014. Congress approved \$146 million.

FY2016: The Obama Administration requested a slight increase in NEH funding to \$147.9 million which while well above the FY2013 post-sequestration level of \$139 is still well below the FY2010 figure of \$167.5. The House Interior Committee has approved \$146 million, almost two million dollars less than what the Obama administration asked for but still level funding for FY16. The Smithsonian Institution was budgeted for level funding of \$819 million. The National Park Service's Historic Preservation Programs are budgeted at \$60.9 million—a +4.5 million increase but the funds are dedicated to “competitive grants” to preserve the sites and stories of the Civil Right Movement.

Committee Membership

Charlene Bickford, co-chair
Mary Jo Binker, co-chair
Christopher Brick, co-chair
Jim McClure
Paul Israel
Dan Feller
Christy Regenhardt
Ray Smock, ex officio (ADE NHPRC Rep.)

