



August 15, 2016

The Honorable Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Administrator
National Aeronautics & Space Administration
300 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20546

Dear General Bolden,

We are writing to you on behalf of the National Coalition for History (NCH) to express our concern about the possibility that the history office at the Johnson Space Center is facing elimination at the end of the current fiscal year because of budget cutbacks. This is especially disconcerting considering the vital role the JSC office has played in preserving the oral histories of not only astronauts but the engineers, scientists, technicians and agency managers who blazed our nation's trail into space.

The National Coalition for History is a consortium of over 55 organizations that advocates on federal, state and local legislative and regulatory issues. The coalition is made up of a diverse number of groups representing historians, archivists, researchers, teachers, students, documentary editors, preservationists, genealogists, political scientists, museum professionals and other stakeholders.

Among those we represent are federal historians who work diligently throughout the government ensuring that our nation's records are preserved and made accessible to the public. NASA, as one of the federal government's more visible agencies, has done a tremendous job over the past nearly 60 years of ensuring that your agency's vast holdings are available to historians, researchers, journalists, filmmakers, teachers, students and others.

NASA's history offices at your headquarters and various centers across the country, including the Johnson Space Center, are truly national treasures. One of our members, the Organization of American Historians, recognized the JSC in 2016 by awarding it the prestigious "Friend of History Award." The prize "recognizes an institution or organization, or an individual working primarily outside college or university settings, for outstanding support of historical research, the public presentation of American history." We find it ironic that an office whose excellence has been recognized by its peers can be in such a perilous situation.

We strongly urge you to provide the funding necessary to keep this office not just open but with the resources it needs to be fully staffed and maintain the excellent level of service to the historical community and the public as it has in the past.

We know that you have asked your Chief Historian William Barry to provide you with an overall assessment of history programs and resources across the agency. We applaud your strong interest

and commitment to improving what is already a model program for other federal agencies.
Please feel free to call on us in any way we can assist in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Alan Kraut in black ink.

Alan Kraut, Ph.D
President

Handwritten signature of Lee White in blue ink.

Lee White
Executive Director