



Issues at a Glance

Last updated 4-2-18

The National Coalition for History is a non-profit educational organization providing leadership in history-related advocacy. We represent the interests of a diverse constituency including historians, archivists, researchers, teachers, students, preservationists, political scientists, museum professionals, genealogists, and other stakeholders. The following is a summary of our policy agenda, developed in conjunction with our constituent organizations. See our more detailed briefs on the individual issues for further information.

Records Access:

Maximizing public access to federal government records and information is necessary to promote accountability, create an informed citizenry, and enable historians to conduct effective research. Progress has been made in the last few years through amendments to the Presidential and Federal Records Act and the Freedom of Information Act. We continue to support further efforts to increase access to federal records.

National Endowment for the Humanities:

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awards grants to cultural institutions – museums, archives, libraries, universities, etc – and to individual scholars to support teaching, research, and access to humanities resources. It has lost significant funding in recent years, dropping from \$168 million in FY2010 to \$153 million in FY2018. For FY2019, President Trump proposed elimination of the agency. We urge Congress to reject that proposal and to maintain or increase funding for NEH.

National Historical Publications and Records Commission:

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is the grant-making arm of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). It supports the preservation, publication, and accessibility of documents related to U.S. history, and provides leadership for archives across America. It has lost significant funding in recent years, dropping from \$13 million in FY2010 to only \$6 million in FY2018. For FY2019, President Trump proposed elimination of the agency. We urge Congress to reject that proposal and to maintain or increase funding for NHPRC.

History Education:

History education is essential in providing students with the skills and knowledge to be informed citizens. However, American students consistently underperform in national history assessments. Programs like the American History and Civics Academies and National Activities Grants provide key support for K-12 history education in this country. Unfortunately, President Trump's



FY2019 budget request would completely eliminate those programs. We urge Congress to reject that proposal and to maintain or increase funding for these key history education initiatives.

Institute of Museum and Library Services:

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for museums and libraries. IMLS funds projects across the country, but is only able to fund a small fraction of the grant applications it receives. The IMLS has lost significant funding in recent years, dropping from \$282 million in FY2010 to only \$240 million in FY2018. For FY2019, President Trump proposed elimination of the agency. We urge Congress to reject that proposal and to maintain or increase funding for IMLS.

Historic Preservation:

Historic preservation programs, many of them under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, provide essential financial and organizational support for protecting our irreplaceable historic places and cultural resources. President Trump's FY2019 budget request proposed the elimination of the Heritage Partnerships Program and the American Battlefield Protection program, as well as considerable cuts to National Recreation and Preservation programs and the Historic Preservation Fund. We urge Congress to reject that proposal and to maintain or increase funding for these crucial historic preservation and cultural programs.

Smithsonian Institution:

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) is the world's largest museum, education, and research complex. It spans nineteen museums and the National Zoo, as well as research centers, cultural centers, and outreach and education programs. The Smithsonian has seen an overall budget increase in recent years, from \$761 million in FY2010 to \$1043 million in FY2018, although its funding varies depending on ongoing construction and building rehabilitation needs. We urge Congress to maintain or increase funding for the Smithsonian.

American Museum of Women's History:

In 2014, Congress created a commission to study the potential creation of a national women's history museum. In 2016, the commission affirmed the necessity of such a museum and laid out a strategic plan for its fundraising and construction. We fully support efforts to ensure the creation of a world-class museum honoring the impact and experience of women in America. We urge Congress to allocate land and funds for the new museum, and to ensure that professional historians with expertise in women's history are involved in its development.

Library of Congress:

The Library of Congress (LOC) is the largest library in the world, housing over 164 million items and responding to over one million reference requests every year. It also houses the U.S. Copyright Office and the Congressional Research Service. Unlike most history-related agencies



and programs, the LOC has received consistent increases in funding in recent years, from \$440 million in FY2010 to \$670 million in FY2018, and President Trump's budget request for FY2019 proposed another small increase. We urge Congress to support that increase.

Oral History:

In the past, oral historians have faced intrusive regulation from Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). IRBs were designed to regulate the use of human subjects in biomedical and behavioral research, but often interfered unnecessarily with oral history projects. The historical community won a major victory in 2017 when the federal government limited the scope of the rule to formally exclude oral history from such review, although implementation of the new rule has been delayed. We continue to support efforts to ensure that oral historians and all others in the historical profession can do their work without the intrusion of unnecessary oversight.