



June 11, 2019

The Honorable Elijah Cummings  
Chairman  
House Committee on Oversight and Reform  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cummings:

The National Coalition for History (NCH) is a consortium of more than 50 organizations that advocates and educates on federal legislative and regulatory issues affecting historians, archivists, political scientists, teachers, students, genealogists, and other stakeholders. As researchers and conservators of American history and culture, we care deeply about the programs and activities of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

We are writing today to urge you to markup HR 2978, the “National Historical Publications and Records Commission Reauthorization Act of 2019.” The bill would reauthorize the NHPRC at a level of \$15 million from fiscal year 2020 to 2025. From 1991 thru 2009, Congress authorized the NHPRC at \$10 million. Although the NHPRC’s authorization lapsed after 2009, Congress has continued to fund the program albeit at a modest level. A new authorization level is required because much has changed in the publication and archival/records fields in the past few decades. Accounting for inflation alone, \$10 million in 1991 is equivalent to \$18.7 million today. So \$15 million is a modest increase when one factors that into the requested authorization level.

The NHPRC has lost significant funding since FY2010 when its budget peaked at \$13 million. Due to strong bi-partisan support, Congress has consistently funded the NHPRC at a modest level of \$6 million the past few fiscal years despite efforts to eliminate the commission. The House Appropriations Committee has just approved a level of \$7 million for FY 20. However, this is still barely adequate to support ongoing programs and implement critical new digital initiatives. Passage of HR 2978 would send a strong signal to appropriators that your colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the Oversight Committee support this small program that is so vital to the preservation and dissemination of our nation’s documentary history.

Sincerely,

Lee White  
Executive Director