March 23, 2023

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree,

We are writing to thank the Subcommittee for its past support of funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and respectfully request your support of a funding level of at least $211 million for the NEH in the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Interior, Environment & Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The humanities play a critical role in our nation as strong cultural institutions create healthy communities and thriving regional economies. The only federal agency dedicated to funding the humanities, the NEH delivers competitive grants to institutions that enhance the public’s knowledge of fields such as literature, language, history, philosophy, governments, and social sciences. This work promotes cultural understanding, awareness, and connection across the nation in 56 jurisdictions through its Federal/State Partnership Office which directly supports state and jurisdictional humanities councils, touching every congressional district.

Nationally, scholars sponsored by state humanities councils provide teachers with a deeper understanding of history and culture while helping them develop new teaching methods at over 1200 schools. These programs enrich the classroom experience for millions of students and create a new generation of civically engaged youth.

Thanks to your leadership, Congress secured the NEH’s highest proposed budget during the FY23 budget negotiations, a significant increase over the Senate Appropriations Committee’s proposal that would have undermined the agency’s ability to process grants. This level of funding has allowed the NEH to reach new underserved and rural communities and facilitate over 7800 grants awarded by the state humanities councils. Also included in the package is support for “A More Perfect Union,” a special initiative to assemble the NEH’s comprehensive catalog of American history for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

While recent Congressional investments have stimulated renewed interest in our cultural institutions, our continued support is necessary to sustain NEH programs that fill the museums and cultural centers of our cities and preserve the character and history of small-town USA.

Robust funding in FY24 would bolster a new NEH initiative, American Tapestry: Weaving Together Past, Present, and Future. This program will encourage projects that elevate the role of civics in schools and public programs, promote media literacy, and use thoughtful research to examine threats to our democracy. American Tapestry will enhance capacity at museums, libraries, historical sites, and centers of learning to amplify the untold stories of historically underrepresented groups and isolated communities, including those of Tribal Nations, community colleges, HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs, and other minority-serving institutions throughout the nation.
We believe that strong federal investments in the humanities are crucial for preserving the U.S.’s place as a world leader in education and innovation. In addition, the humanities provide our nation's citizenry and workforce with the foundation necessary to meaningfully engage with our democracy and confront the civic issues of tomorrow.

As billions of dollars are rightfully invested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, we must equally prioritize robust federal investment in the humanities. We appreciate your consideration of the humanities during negotiations, and we look forward to working with you to preserve our treasured cultural institutions.

Sincerely,

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Member of Congress

Mike Carey
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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