



ASSOCIATION  
OF RESEARCH  
LIBRARIES



Council on  
Library and  
Information  
Resources

April 4, 2006

The Honorable Conrad Burns  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Dirksen Senate Office Building  
SD-132  
Washington, D.C. 20510-6033

Dear Chairman Burns:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). ARL and CLIR are writing in support of the FY2007 budget request of \$140.955 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and, in particular, the \$17.988 million budget request for the Preservation and Access Division, whose work is critical to preserving our American heritage. ARL and CLIR respectfully urge that Congress provide an addition \$15 million or a total of \$156 million for NEH in FY 2007.

NEH plays a vital role in preserving our historic and cultural legacy, improving education at all levels, and helping Americans better understand the life of their Nation. The Preservation and Access Division of NEH was created to help advance knowledge and understanding of the humanities in America. Through its grant programs, the Division supports projects that preserve and increase the availability of resources, such as books, journals, newspapers, photographs, and films that are crucial for research, education, and public programming in the humanities.

NEH funding is absolutely critical to ongoing programs of interest to the library community: the Brittle Books Program, the U.S. Newspaper Program, and Preservation Education and Training. Without Congressional support for NEH, fragile material in libraries and repositories in universities, colleges, and communities across the country would be in danger of permanent loss.

We applaud NEH's quick response in assisting cultural institutions following the devastation caused by Katrina. NEH provided \$30,000 to state humanities councils in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and generously channeled \$1 million in emergency grants to libraries, museums, historical societies and cultural institutions. More recently, NEH announced that it would dedicate an

additional \$250,000 to hurricane relief for affected humanities-related institutions.

ARL and CLIR also encourage funding for the Administration's request of \$15.239 million for the *We the People* initiative. This initiative further enhances NEH's core functions in critical areas, including Preservation and Access. The initiative, created in response to the lack of basic historical knowledge among many Americans, is designed to enhance the teaching, research, and understanding of American history and culture. Of particular interest to the research library community is one of the initiative's key programs, the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP). This program will convert microfilm of historical newspapers published between 1836 and 1922 into digital files and mount them on a national database that will be freely accessible to all Americans via the Internet. This effort is a partnership between NEH, which funds the digitization projects, and the Library of Congress, which mounts and maintains the resources. We strongly encourage you to support this initiative.

Although microfilming serves as a great tool for preserving America's books and newspapers, ARL and CLIR strongly support the efforts of NEH to complement its preservation program with grants for the digitization of library materials. Digital technology provides new opportunities to extend the reach of humanities resources into every classroom, library, and home. To that end, many repositories of specialized and rare materials are digitizing their holdings to provide students, educators, and scholars easy access to them. Moreover, libraries and other humanities organizations are providing online access to an ever-increasing body of knowledge created in "born digital" journals, books, and databases.

NEH also provides critical assistance to our Nation's libraries, archives, historical societies, and other repositories for preservation education and training. Grants in this area help support U.S. graduate programs in art and material culture conservation; preservation workshops, surveys, and information services to hundreds of cultural institutions; and targeted workshops for staff who manage digital imaging and preservation microfilming projects.

Last year, the NEH and the National Science Foundation (NSF) formed a partnership to develop and advance knowledge of endangered languages. The initiative, "Documenting Endangered Languages," records, documents and archives information on 3,000 languages that are near extinction. ARL and CLIR strongly support this important multiyear, cooperative initiative.

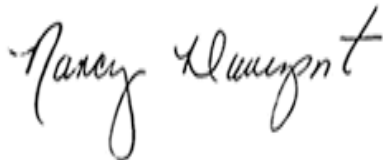
Information, education, and knowledge are the pillars of our country's domestic progress and international leadership in the 21st century. The existence and support of humanities is vital to ensure a successful democracy by means of reflection, participation, and communication. The Nation must preserve the historical record accumulated by past generations to ensure the success of future generations.

We very much appreciate the Subcommittee's continuing support of NEH and its programs.

Sincerely,



Prudence S. Adler  
Associate Executive Director  
Association of Research Libraries



Nancy Davenport  
President  
Council on Library and Information Resources

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***The Association of Research Libraries (ARL)** ARL influences the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the diverse communities they serve. ARL pursues this mission by advancing the goals of its member research libraries, providing leadership in public and information policy to the scholarly and higher education communities, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, and shaping a future environment that leverages its interests with those of allied organizations.*

***The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)** is an independent, not-for-profit organization working to maintain and improve access to information for generations to come. In partnership with other organizations, CLIR helps create services that expand the concept of "library" and supports the providers and preservers of information. CLIR is supported by fees from sponsoring institutions, grants from public and private foundations, contracts with federal agencies and contributions from individuals.*