



Association of Centers for the Study of Congress

September 17, 2012

Governor Nathan Deal
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

As an independent alliance of institutions and organizations across the nation dedicated to supporting the study and understanding of Congress and our representative democracy, we write to encourage you to reverse the Georgia Secretary of State's proposed budget cut to the Georgia Archives. This cut closes the Archives' doors to the public and terminates staff in the remaining ten positions of an already decimated workforce. The importance of local, state, and national archives in the preservation of this nation's historical memory and the protection of its citizens' rights cannot be overstated.

Access to public records is an essential function of American government, a function that fosters greater accountability and transparency in government and protects the rights of citizens. Much of the American record—evidence of births, education, marriage, property owned, obligations satisfied, and criminal conduct—is held at the state and local level. The preservation, access and use of these records provide information needs for not only students, teachers, scholars, and genealogists but also government officials, lawyers, business people and a wide range of users. Closing Georgia Archives and eliminating staff will deny citizens their rights to reasonable time and place for inspecting public records as well as hinder state agencies' needs for conducting business. Educational and research activities will also be stymied.

From previous cuts, Georgia Archives has already lost staff and resources. Support for records management and electronic records training in local and state government has ceased. Much of this training and assistance was funded from federal grants that are predicated on public access to the Archives. Of course, an adequate workforce is

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necessary to fulfill a grant or a mission. Certainly, there should be movement toward restoring the Archives' budget.

We recognize that the economic straits we face now are demanding greater sacrifices at all levels of society. We hold, though, that sacrificing access to our public documents is one none of us can afford if we hope to survive another two hundred and twenty-five years as a representative democracy. Governor Deal, as you sign the proclamation for Georgia Archives Month this week, we hope that you will give upmost consideration to this and other messages in support of the Georgia Archives and its Mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheryl B. Vogt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sheryl B. Vogt, President
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