

**THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED FY 2014 BUDGETS FOR THE NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES & RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA) AND THE NATIONAL  
HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS & RECORDS COMMISSION (NHPRC)**

**Submitted by the National Coalition for History**

Lee White, Executive Director  
202-544-2422, x-116  
lwhite@historycoalition.org

May 16, 2013

The Honorable Ander Crenshaw  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial Services  
& General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Room B-300  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The National Coalition for History (NCH) is a consortium of over 50 organizations that advocates and educates on federal legislative and regulatory issues affecting historians, archivists, political scientists, teachers, and other stakeholders. **The Obama Administration has recommended funding the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grants program at a level of only \$3 million in fiscal year (FY) 2014, a 40 percent cut from the \$5 million it received in FY '13, prior to the reductions implemented under the sequester. NCH urges the subcommittee to support funding the NHPRC at the \$5 million level.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our views on the agency's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget. As researchers and conservators of American history and culture we care deeply about the programs and activities of the National Archives and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

We realize Congress continues to face enormous fiscal challenges in crafting the federal budget for fiscal year 2014. While we all agree cuts are necessary as a result of these tight budget parameters, we are disappointed that the President has chosen to once again target the NHPRC for the lion's share of the cuts at the National Archives. The Obama Administration has recommended funding the NHPRC grants program at a level of only \$3 million, a 40 percent reduction from the \$5 million it received in FY '13, before the sequester reduced its budget to \$4.75 million. Over the past three fiscal years, the NHPRC has seen its budget slashed from \$13 million in FY '10, to \$7 million in FY '11 to only \$5 million in the current fiscal year.

For years the NHPRC has been threatened with elimination, and inflation has seriously eroded its funding level in constant dollars. For example, the \$3 million proposed by the Administration equals the funding level the NHPRC received in fiscal year 1983. Just to keep pace with inflation since 1983, the NHPRC would have to receive \$6.8 million in FY '14.

With an appropriation of only \$3 million, the NHPRC will be hard pressed to support its ongoing programs and mission of at even a minimal level, let alone fund any new projects. We are requesting Congress to preserve this program, which has already been cut substantially.

This small grants program enables the National Archives to provide leadership through grants that support exploration of major archival issues, such as preservation of electronic records, disaster preparedness and coordination and communication among archivists nationwide.

The NHPRC was the first granting agency to recognize the serious challenges posed in preserving electronic records. Without properly addressing this very temporal form of records, critical information needed to ensure the legal rights of citizens will be irrevocably lost or compromised for all time. The NHPRC has supported projects such as intensive training for managing electronic records, and development of techniques for preserving and making these records accessible. A major strength of such projects is that they identify processes and approaches that can also be implemented by other archival organizations, so the funding impact can be truly national and far reaching.

The NHPRC also provides grants to documentary editions (book and electronic) of the papers of nationally significant individuals and institutions. Examples include the Ratification of the U.S. Constitution project, the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, and the Papers of George Washington. NHPRC has also funded an on-going project to make the papers of the Founding Fathers available for free on-line. In fact, the NHPRC is committed to promoting increased public access to all of the publications it funds through digitization and the creation of educational resources.

NHPRC grants leverage state, local, institutional, foundation, and other private funding by requiring 50% cost sharing—i.e. for every federal dollar invested, another dollar is spent.

NHPRC funding is the linchpin of most projects' funding structures and without federal dollars

even long-standing existing projects could be terminated.

A perfect example is the First Federal Congress Project whose mission is to collect, research, edit and publish the *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress 1789-1791* (DHFFC). Twenty out of a projected 22 volumes have already been published, yet without continued NHPRC support it is possible the final two volumes of the edition might never be published.

NHPRC grants also provide the Archivist of the United States with his primary tool for providing national leadership and promoting national and regional cooperation among the state archivists to address common issues such as electronic records and disaster recovery. For example, following Hurricane Katrina a small NHPRC grant to the Council of State Archivists allowed archivists to meet and identify needs for training and information to prevent the tremendous loss of essential vital records in the affected areas. That small investment of NHPRC funds led to a multi-million dollar disaster-preparedness project with FEMA and the distribution of training to over 4,000 records and emergency managers in all 50 states.

In conclusion, NHPRC grants have had a tremendous positive impact across our nation on preserving our documentary heritage, laying the foundation for educational tools to bring documents into classrooms at all levels, and making documentary resources readily accessible to a wide variety of audiences. Without this federal leadership, most nationwide and regional archival cooperation would be threatened.

The National Coalition for History urges the subcommittee to support funding for the NHPRC at the \$5 million level it received in the current year's National Archives and Records Administration budget. Thank you.

Cc: Representative José Serrano

**Lee White**

**Executive Director, National Coalition for History**

Lee White is currently the Executive Director of the National Coalition for History (NCH) in Washington, DC. A consortium of over 60 organizations, the National Coalition for History advocates on federal legislative and regulatory issues affecting historians, archivists, teachers, researchers, and other stakeholders.

Mr. White is an attorney with over thirty years of experience in government relations with membership associations, as well as several years with the federal government as a legislative specialist. In addition to a degree in law from The Catholic University of America, White also holds a Master's Degree in American History from George Mason University.