

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 21, 2023

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
Financial Services and General Government
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Ranking Member
Financial Services and General Government
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Womack and Ranking Member Hoyer:

As Members of Congress with a strong interest in historic preservation and open access to public records, we write in support of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). We respectfully request you appropriate the President's full funding request of \$443.2 million for the agency's operating expenses and \$10 million for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) in the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill.

NARA's core function is to preserve and make accessible federal government and historical records. The National Archives now has over 40 facilities nationwide including its main facilities in Washington, D.C. and College Park, Maryland, and 14 Presidential Libraries. NARA is also responsible for the Federal Register and the NHPRC, which provides grants for the creation of documentary collections (books and electronic) of the papers of nationally significant individuals and institutions.

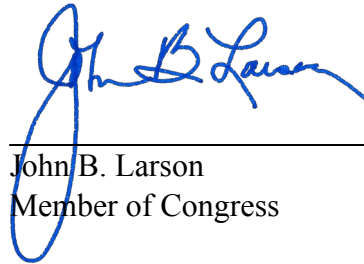
NARA's operating expenses budget in inflation-adjusted dollars has remained stagnant for over a decade, even as its responsibilities have increased. NARA's FY21 operating expenses budget was \$377 million, which is \$14 million less than the FY20 level of \$373 million. While NARA did receive a slight increase of \$11 million in FY22 up to \$388 million, that amount in inflation adjusted dollars is less than what the agency received in FY 2010.

NARA faces enormous challenges. For example, as of September there was a backlog of nearly 440,000 requests for veterans' records at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, on December 31, 2022, NARA implemented a new policy that requires federal agencies to submit all records to NARA in electronic form; paper records are no longer accepted. This major policy shift requires increased funding to make that transition. NARA has also committed itself by FY 2026 to digitize 500 million pages of records and make them available online to the public through the National Archives Catalog.

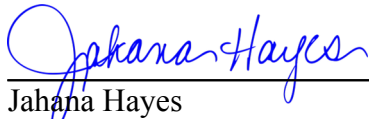
We appreciate the Subcommittee's support for NHPRC in recent years, and it is crucial that it be funded at \$10 million. In addition to distributing grants across the country the leverage private funds, NHPRC supports grants that tackle major archival issues, such as preservation of electronic records, disaster preparedness, and coordination and communication among archivists nationwide.

We understand the many difficult choices the Subcommittee faces in constructing its FY 2024 budget bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request for NARA.


Sincerely,



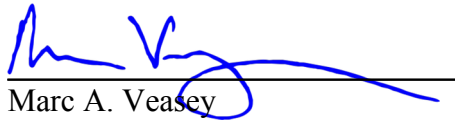
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



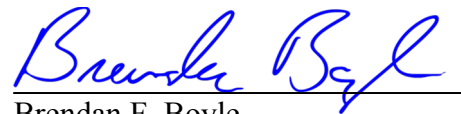
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress




Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



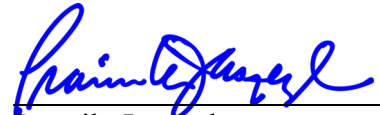
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



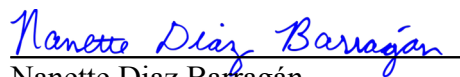
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress




Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



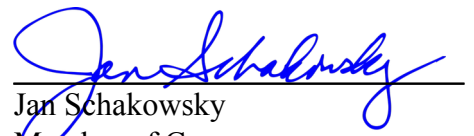
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress




Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



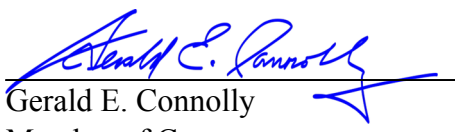
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



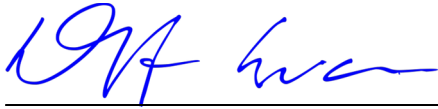
Patrick K. Ryan
Member of Congress



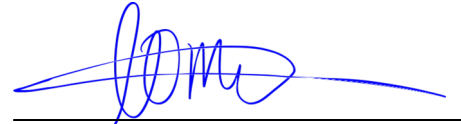
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



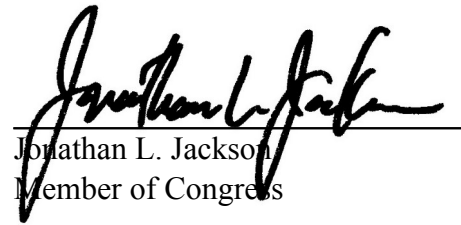
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



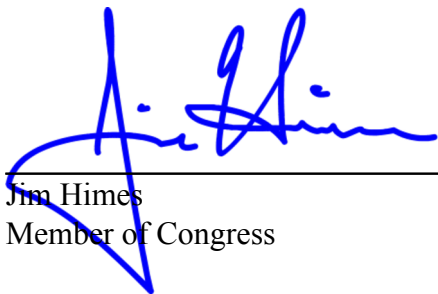
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



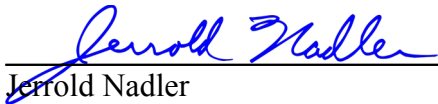
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



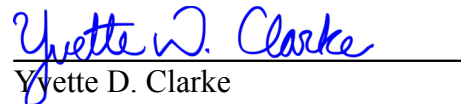
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Seth Magaziner

Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress