

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Chairman
Financial Services and General Government
2000 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Womack
Ranking Member
Financial Services and General Government
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Quigley and Ranking Member Womack:

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 \$433 million for the agency's operating expenses in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) 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 constant dollars has remained stagnant for over a decade, even as its responsibilities have increased. NARA's FY 20 operating expenses budget was \$359 million, which is \$14 million less than the FY 19 level of \$373 million. When adjusted for inflation, NARA's budget has decreased by 10% since 2012. While NARA did receive a slight increase of \$18 million in FY21, those funds were for one-time costs related to the Presidential transition, resulting in functionally flat funding.

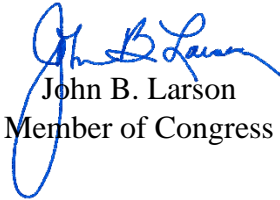
As government agencies transition to electronic records, the volume of NARA's holdings has increased more than threefold, as has the time required to process these new documents. Congress has also placed additional responsibilities on the agency, including requiring NARA to reduce the backlogs of records awaiting declassification. Additionally, NARA has also been given responsibility for three new presidential libraries in the last decades, increasing staff, maintenance, and records management costs.

Despite these added responsibilities, NARA today has fewer employees than it did in 1985. This combination of increased responsibilities and underfunding has forced NARA to cut back on public services and research hours at its facilities. These hours are not adequate to serve the public need for accessibility and government accountability and limit the ability for American's

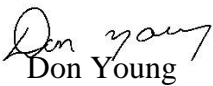
to access their own government's public records. Research at NARA facilities is used to prove citizenship, conduct genealogical research, or gain access to earned veterans their benefits. Additionally, Freedom of Information Act requests and declassifications are backlogged due to a lack of resources.

We understand the many difficult choices the Subcommittee faces in constructing its FY 2022 budget bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request for NARA.

Sincerely,



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

/S/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/S/
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/S/
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/S/
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

/S/
Jim Himes
Member of Congress

/S/
Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

/S/
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

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Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

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Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

/S/
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

/S/
Katie Porter
Member of Congress

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Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

/S/
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch
Member of Congress

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Steve Stivers
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Steven Horsford
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Jahana Hayes
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Lucy McBath
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Jan Schakowsky
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Ro Khanna
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Marc Veasey
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Sharice L. Davids
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Joe Courtney
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Donald Norcross
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Cori Bush
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Andy Kim
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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