



Re: FY 2010 Interior Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2996)—NEH

September 24, 2009

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

On behalf of the National Humanities Alliance and its 105 member organizations and institutions, we are writing to ask you to support the House-passed level of \$170 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in the upcoming House/Senate conference on the FY 2010 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2996). We deeply appreciate your leadership and support for the humanities as Chairman and Ranking Member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee.

We strongly support retaining the House figures in conference, which as you know, include much-needed increases for NEH national and state programs. The House mark represents a critical increase of \$15 million for the NEH. The Senate bill (currently under consideration on the floor) would provide overall FY 2010 funding of \$161.3 million for NEH, \$8.7 million less than the House level. We understand that Congress faces many difficult choices this year, but do not believe the Senate recommendation will allow the agency to keep pace with the significant unmet needs of humanities institutions, scholars, and educators, and the communities they serve.

National Programs—We are particularly concerned that the Senate bill provides relatively flat funding for the programs that collectively make up the pool of funds available to support NEH national grant competitions. ***We strongly support House-approved figures for national programs totaling \$101.4 million, which would constitute an overall increase of \$7.4 million (7.8%) for these programs.*** According to our analysis (see table, below), the Senate's combined allocation for these programs totals \$95.3 million, which would represent a net increase of only \$1.3 million (1.4%) in the NEH's competitive grant-making capacity for FY 2010. NEH competitive grants support a wide range of activities, including:

- professional development workshops and institutes for teachers and faculty
- fellowships for college/university faculty and independent scholars
- collaborative research and innovation in digital scholarship
- classroom curricula and materials development
- preservation of historically-significant collections and resources
- public media projects in film, radio and television
- capacity-building challenge grants to non-profit humanities institutions

Our members, and the thousands of teachers, scholars, humanities organizations and institutions they represent, use NEH grants to maintain a strong system of academic research, teaching, and learning in the humanities for all Americans. NEH competitive awards represent a one-of-a-kind funding source for individual scholars, and a wide range of non-profit institutions located throughout the United States, including: 2- and 4-year colleges, universities, local education associations, museums, historical societies, libraries, independent research centers, and scholarly societies. State humanities councils are also eligible to compete for national awards (in addition to stipends received through the Federal/State Partnership), and do so regularly with success.

Demand for humanities project support, as demonstrated by NEH application rates and feedback from the field, far exceeds funding available. In FY 2008, applications for NEH grants in all programs represented \$421 million

in requested funds, more than three times the program dollars obligated for that year. At the national level, only 16% of competitive, peer-reviewed project proposals were funded, compared to a 26% funding rate for merit-reviewed projects at the National Science Foundation (an agency similar to NEH in its mission).

Table: National Endowment for the Humanities Appropriations (in thousands of dollars), Fiscal Year 2010

	FY 2010 Budget Request	FY 2010 House (6/26/09)	FY 2010 House v. FY 2009	FY 2010 Senate (6/25/09)	FY 2010 Senate v. FY 2009	FY 2010 Senate v. House
NEH Total	161,315	170,000	15,000	161,315	6,315	-8,685
NEH Program Funds	133,815	142,500	13,500	133,815	4,815	-8,685
National Programs	95,300	101,376	7,376	95,300	1,300	-6,076
Challenge Grants	9,500	9,500	200	9,500	200	0
Digital Humanities	4,000	5,138	1,138	4,000	0	-1,138
Education	14,750	16,027	1,527	14,750	250	-1,277
Preservation and Access	16,250	17,442	1,442	16,250	250	-1,192
Public Programs	14,750	15,942	1,442	14,750	250	-1,192
Research	16,000	17,277	2,777	16,000	1,500	-1,277
We the People	14,500	14,500	-1,300	14,500	-1,300	0
Program Development	750	750	350	750	350	0
Treasury Funds	4,800	4,800	-200	4,800	-200	0
Federal/State Partnership	38,515	41,124	6,124	38,515	3,515	-2,609
NEH Administration	27,500	27,500	1,500	27,500	1,500	0
National Capital Arts & Cultural Affairs	10,000	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	171,315	170,000	15,000	161,315	6,315	-8,685

State Programs—The House bill allocates \$41.1 million for the NEH Federal/State Partnership, which constitutes an increase of \$6.1 million over the current year. The Senate bill provides a smaller increase of \$3.5 million for this program for FY 2010. Through the Federal/State Partnership, the NEH provides operating grants to the 56 state humanities councils. State humanities councils sponsor a range of projects and programs, such as reading, discussion, and literacy programs, speakers bureaus, professional development for teachers, cultural and heritage tourism, multimedia programs and publications, and Chautauqua.

Investing in the humanities at a time of economic crisis

NEH represents a unique source of support for our nation’s humanities research and education infrastructure, at a time when non-profit associations and education institutions throughout the country are under tremendous stress from the current economic crisis. Higher education leaders and others have expressed deep concern that as a nation, we are at risk of losing a generation of young students, scholars, and researchers with advanced knowledge and understanding of history, literature, languages, philosophy, comparative religion and other diverse fields of study within the humanities. It is especially at this time that the federal government should increase its investment in the humanities *at all levels of learning* to ensure a broadly-educated, competitive workforce for the knowledge-based, global economy of the future; and to foster the cultural understanding, historical perspective, and modes of critical thought that strengthen communities, and that help individuals and policymakers address complex problems in uncertain times.

Thank you for your strong support for the NEH and for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Jessica Jones Irons
Executive Director
National Humanities Alliance



John Churchill
President, National Humanities Alliance
Secretary, The Phi Beta Kappa Society

cc: Subcommittee Members and Staff

National Humanities Alliance Member Organizations and Institutions

African Studies Association
American Academy of Arts and Sciences
American Academy of Religion
American Anthropological Association
American Association for State and Local History
American Association of Museums
American Association of University Professors
American Comparative Literature Association
American Council of Learned Societies
American Dialect Society
American Folklore Society
American Historical Association
American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works
American Musicological Society
American Numismatic Society
American Philological Association
American Philosophical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society for Aesthetics
American Society for Theatre Research
American Sociological Association
American Studies Association
Amherst College
Arizona State University
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Documentary Editing
Association for Jewish Studies
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Law Schools
Association of American Universities
Association of American University Presses
Association of Art Museum Curators
Association of Art Museum Directors
Association of Research Libraries
Boston University Humanities Foundation
Center for Research Libraries
Center for the Humanities (University of Miami)
Center for the Liberal Arts (East Carolina University)
Coalition for Networked Information
College Art Association
Columbia University
Cornell University
Community College Humanities Association
Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Library and Information Resources
Dartmouth College
Drew University
Duke University
Dictionary Society of North America
Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities (University of California, Berkeley)
Federation of State Humanities Councils
The George Washington University
German Studies Association
Hall Center for the Humanities (University of Kansas)
Harvard University
Heritage Preservation
History of Science Society
Imagining America (Syracuse University)
Independent Research Libraries Association
Institute for the Arts & Humanities (Penn State University)
Institute for the Humanities (University of Michigan)
Institute for the Medical Humanities (University of Texas Medical Branch)
Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (University of Notre Dame)
Linguistic Society of America
Medieval Academy of America
Middle East Studies Association
Minnesota Humanities Center
Modern Language Association of America
National Communication Association
National Council of Teachers of English
National Humanities Center
Northeast Document Conservation Center
Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
Organization of American Historians
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Popular Culture Association
Regional Alliance for Preservation
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Shakespeare Association of America
Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies (Princeton University)
Simpson Center for the Humanities (University of Washington)
Sixteenth Century Society and Conference
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Ethnomusicology
Society for Music Theory
Society for the History of Technology
Society of Architectural Historians
Society of Biblical Literature
Society of Christian Ethics
Stanford Humanities Center
Syracuse University
Texas A&M University
The Council of the Humanities (Princeton University)
The Franke Institute for the Humanities (University of Chicago)
University at Buffalo (SUNY) Humanities Institute
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Oregon
University of Richmond
University of Southern California
Virginia Center for the Humanities