



November 16, 2020

The Honorable John Kennedy  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Financial Services  
and General Government  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the membership of the Organization of American Historians we are writing to urge you to fund the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in FY2021, and to reconsider your decision to eliminate NHPRC appropriations. As the largest professional organization in the country representing historians of U.S. history, the OAH asks that you concur with the House in providing the \$7 million in funding that the NHPRC requires to serve its core mission of providing national leadership in promoting the preservation and use of the materials of our nation's documentary heritage through grants that increase preservation, use, and accessibility of documentary collections. The work undertaken by NHPRC is essential to understanding our shared national past.

Vibrant democratic societies demand robust and transparent preservation and interpretation of the documentary record, and NHPRC is critical to this work. As the grantmaking arm of the National Archives and Records Administration, NHPRC gives vital support to the nation's historians represented by OAH as they document and analyze U.S. history and culture. NHPRC has and continues to fund hundreds of projects designed to preserve records of enduring historic value. NHPRC grants currently support dozens of papers and documentary projects associated with nationally significant individuals and institutions, ranging from the nation's founders, the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the first Federal Congress, to Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, and Eleanor Roosevelt. NHPRC grants further support the essential work of state and local archives, universities, historical societies, and many other non-profit organizations to improve preservation training and techniques, process records, and strengthen archival programs.

The Organization of American Historians is dedicated to promoting excellence in the scholarship, teaching and presentation of American history, and to encouraging informed public discussion of and engagement with historical questions. A well-preserved and accessible documentary record is the linchpin of the historical inquiry pursued by our members and partner organizations, as well as a vibrant and functional democracy.

There has always been strong bipartisan support for the NHPRC. At a time when the teaching and writing of United States history is being increasingly politicized, we implore you to continue this tradition by reversing your decision to zero-out NHPRC funding, and thereby allowing NHPRC's necessary work to continue.

Sincerely,

George Sanchez  
President

Beth English  
Executive Director