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**Remarks before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee**  
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Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran, and members of the Subcommittee. I am here on behalf of the National Humanities Alliance to discuss funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). I would like to make oral remarks here, and to submit our written testimony for the record.

Our members are 104 scholarly and professional associations and institutions, representing the ten's of thousands of scholars, curators and other professionals in the humanities. I serve as the elected president of the Alliance. I am a political scientist, and the Executive Director of the American Political Science Association.

For FY 2012, we respectfully urge the subcommittee to fund the National Endowment for the Humanities (the NEH) at the FY 2010 enacted level of \$167.5 million.

The NEH is a small agency that does a big job. In fact, it does three big jobs:

- it protects and preserves our cultural resources;
- it facilitates broad public engagement with the nation's heritage; and
- it supports basic scholarly research and education in the humanities, the point I want to emphasize this morning.

The NEH does all this on a remarkably tight budget. We can't risk cut backs that would enfeeble any one of these activities, nor that would compel sacrificing one for the others. Even modest cuts could have a crippling effect.

I started my career wanting to be a city planner. I thought the cities needed help - the solution would be easy - and planning and civil engineering would fix things up. I went to MIT in 1968 to study city planning.

As I began to study urban issues, however, I discovered that urban affairs . . . was a humanities problem. Urban issues were grounded in neighborhoods and sometimes followed folk traditions; urban progress required mechanisms for people to work together with civility; everything was entwined with local history; we could learn much from other places and times about how local government can respond creatively. In the end my studies shifted to humanities and social sciences -- with the same interest in helping cities, but no longer with thinking it would be easy. The humanities alert us to hard problems, and help us address them.

As I started my studies, I happened to spend a summer on a ranch in the West, and this had a big effect on me too (no - not in Idaho, but near by in Montana!) where I debated urban issues with ranchers, was schooled in values of individual responsibility and property rights, felt engagement first-hand, and saw how we all have a common stake as a nation in each other's so-called "local" concerns.

I came away with a deep respect for shared ideas and the gathering of evidence about them, and for public engagement across the country and across diverse issues. As my career developed, I realized that the individual experience I had is what the NEH affords for the whole nation. Public support made a big difference in my studies too. I had veterans benefits, for which I am very grateful, and other federal government support for my graduate study. I was deeply appreciative that the public had invested in the promise of my career. In turn, my career as a scholar, teacher, and public official has been shaped by a conviction that I had been charged with a public responsibility.

If NEH is provided the resources it needs to support new generations of scholars and teachers, I can attest that they will repay the investment for a lifetime.

The humanities are essential partners for our economic and scientific progress, and for our national security. Let me add one quick illustration:

General David Petraeus holds a Ph.d. in political science, and he recently received one of the highest honors from the American Political Science Association for his career. In his remarks, he emphasized that national security affairs is ... a humanities problem. He said he emphasizes the advanced study of the humanities for the young officers around him - urging that they know and study history, language, global cultures in order to meet our contemporary national security challenges.

With its broad public mission, the NEH serves to focus national attention on the role the humanities can play for the nation, by aligning scholarship and teaching with preservation and with public engagement. In framing this mission, NEH Chairman Jim Leach has described the leadership role of the NEH in two important ways:

- to build an infrastructure for ideas - just as we do with the National Science Foundation and other research agencies; and
- to lead in the democratization of ideas, expanding scholarly knowledge of our history and culture in ways that are shared broadly and equally, with active public engagement.

We are grateful for the strong bi-partisan support this Subcommittee has shown the NEH in the past; and we hope you will consider the strongest possible support for the agency in FY 2012.

Thank you.