

April 5, 2002

The Honorable Joe Skeen
Chairman, Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
2302 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3102

Dear Chairman Skeen:

The National Humanities Alliance writes to request a FY-2003 appropriation for the National Endowment for the Humanities of \$155 million, an increase of \$30.5 million over last year's enacted level of \$124.5 million. The National Humanities Alliance is a coalition of more than 80 national humanities organizations representing scholars, teachers, librarians, archivists, museum professionals and others involved in delivering work in the humanities across the country. We submit this request today not just on behalf of these communities, but on behalf of the American people.

Introduction

The National Endowment for the Humanities is the largest single funder of humanities programs in the United States. Though a relatively small program, the leadership provided by NEH is critical for the national effort to:

- preserve and provide access to our nation's historical and cultural resources
- strengthen teaching and learning in history, literature, language and other humanities subjects in schools and colleges
- facilitate research and original scholarship in the humanities
- provide opportunities for lifelong learning in the humanities for all Americans
- strengthen the institutional base of the humanities

With a relatively small investment from Congress, NEH provides access to high-quality educational programs and resources that reach millions of Americans each year. NEH grants are awarded through a competitive, peer-review process based on merit. Not only do NEH grants encourage excellence, but most NEH grants provide leveraging for significant private support, which stimulates millions of dollars in non-federal support each year. The NEH model is consistent with our nation's commitment to excellence, the democratic process, and the responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

The President's request for FY 2003 is \$126.9 million. While this request represents a \$2.4 million increase for administrative and treasury funds, it provides only level funding for endowment programs. The \$155 million recommended by the National Humanities Alliance incorporates the necessary administrative increase, but also enhances the NEH's ability to support humanities projects throughout the U.S. As outlined below, these additional funds would better enable NEH to carry out its mission for the American people, and represent a reasonable step toward addressing unmet program needs. In recent years, the combined impact of budget cuts and inflation has reduced the number, diversity and buying power of NEH awards. In fact, we estimate that the agency is running at about 55% of its demonstrated capacity of ten

years ago. More importantly, current applications in all program areas demonstrate a need that greatly exceeds the endowment's grant-making capacity at present funding levels.

Homeland Defense

We applaud the administration's special initiative, "We the People," to encourage new project proposals that advance our knowledge of the events, ideas, and principles that define the American nation. Requiring no new funds, and working within the agency's established review system, the *We the People* initiative will call upon humanities scholars, teachers, filmmakers, museums, libraries, and other individuals and institutions engaged in the humanities to develop projects on the most significant events and themes in the nation's history and culture. As stated in the NEH *Budget Request*, "The horrific events of September 11 have underscored the importance of the humanities in understanding the state of our union and in responding effectively in times of crisis. A knowledgeable citizenry is essential to homeland defense; Americans need to understand the ideals, ideas, and institutions that undergird our nation if we are to defend it". NEH's overarching mission -- to encourage the study of history, literature, languages, government, philosophy, ethics, religion and other humanities subjects -- helps us not only to better understand our own nation, but other cultures as well.

Federal/State Partnership

The Alliance recommends an increase of \$8.4 million for the NEH Federal/State Partnership, bringing the budget up from \$31.6 to \$40 million for FY 2003. State humanities councils address critical needs in the areas of professional development for teachers, family literacy programs, and public humanities programming that in the broadest sense educates citizens for civic life, and strengthens the fabric of our democracy. The state councils are private, nonprofit, grassroots organizations, located in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five commonwealths and territories. State councils respond to local needs and help to ensure that the best of the humanities reaches Americans in nearly every district of the nation. This increase would guarantee at least \$100,000 for each council (once the population formula has been applied). Every dollar appropriated for the state councils goes directly and immediately into local communities across the country.

Challenge Grants

The Alliance recommends an increase of \$3.4 million for the NEH Office of Challenge Grants, bringing the budget up from \$10.4 to \$13.8 million for FY 2003. Challenge Grants strengthen the institutional base for teaching, research, preservation and public programming in the humanities. Each year, Challenge Grants are the catalyst for bringing millions of dollars in private funds to colleges and universities, museums, libraries, humanities research centers, state councils, historical societies and historical sites. Challenge Grants provide first time grantees a \$1 federal match for each \$3 raised privately, and a 1:4 match for second time recipients. The additional funding would stimulate at least \$10.2 million in new private giving (for a total of at least an additional \$41.4 million in nonfederal funds). Additional funds are needed to increase both the dollar amount and number of awards possible. In addition, an increase in the Challenge Grant program would greatly enhance the agency's ability to provide support for the newly created regional humanities centers, which are eligible to compete under the agency's regular review process.

Education Programs

The Alliance recommends an increase of \$3 million for the NEH Education Division, bringing the budget up from \$12.6 to \$15.6 million for FY 2003. NEH Education programs support content-rich teaching and learning in the humanities for our nation's students. NEH *Summer*

Seminars and Institutes offer college and K-12 teachers opportunities to study significant topics and fundamental texts in the humanities and to revitalize their understanding of history, literature and other humanities subjects. *Humanities Teacher Leadership* awards help elementary and secondary school teachers share the benefits of their participation in seminars and institutes with other educators and schools. *Education Development and Demonstration* grants support projects to strengthen the teaching and learning of humanities subjects in K-12 schools and in colleges and universities across the country. Additional funding would better enable these programs.

- Each additional *Summer Seminars and Institute* funded would reach about 20 teachers and 3100 students who would benefit from these teachers' experience within the year.
- Each teacher enabled through an additional *Humanities Teacher Leadership* award would reach hundreds of other teachers and students.
- Each *Education Development and Demonstration* project funded carries the potential of generating comprehensive plans for school improvement, innovative uses of educational technologies, and national models of excellence in humanities teaching.

Preservation & Access

The Alliance recommends an increase of \$4.6 million for the NEH Preservation & Access Division, bringing the budget up from \$18.9 to \$23.5 million for FY 2003. The Preservation & Access programs are in the lead in the nation's efforts to preserve and increase the availability of cultural, historical and intellectual resources for generations of Americans.

NEH supports preservation of and access to books, journals, newspapers, manuscript and archival collections, maps, photographs, films, sound recordings, oral histories, and objects of material culture held by libraries, archives, museums, historical organizations, and other repositories. NEH also supports preservation education and training, and the acquisition of research tools and reference works; and makes grants for the creation of dictionaries, atlases, encyclopedias, and other major reference works that preserve and portray the history and culture of the United States and the world.

- Additional funding would accelerate support for the Brittle Books and U.S. Newspapers Programs. An estimated 25-30 percent of the printed holdings in the country's research libraries are deteriorating because of the acidity of their paper. To date, 83 libraries and library consortia are involved in the NEH effort to preserve brittle books and serials -- when currently funded newspapers projects in all 50 states are complete (present count is 39), records for 151,500 unique titles dating from 1690 will be available in a national database accessible at 40,000 institutions in the U.S. and abroad. 62 million deteriorating newspaper pages of historical significance will have been microfilmed.
- Additional funding would stimulate further development and implementation of preservation standards and technology, as well as support new reference tools to make our nation's historic and cultural resources available for Americans today and tomorrow.

Public Programs

The Alliance recommends an increase of \$3.8 million for the NEH Public Programs Division, bringing the budget up from \$13.1 to \$16.9 million for FY 2003. Each year, Public Program grants generate projects that reach millions of Americans in every part of the country. The *Humanities Project in Media* program supports the planning, scripting, and production of television and radio programs on significant works and subjects in the humanities. *Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations* support exhibitions of cultural and historical artifacts, along with related publications and programming. *Humanities Projects in Libraries*

and Archives seek to increase public understanding of the humanities through the discovery, interpretation, and greater appreciation of texts, media, Internet resources, and other collections available to Americans in libraries and archives. Grants have also been made for radio call-in programs that in collaboration with libraries explore regional literature in several parts of the country. Additional funding would further enable these programs.

- Each additional *Media Project*, including radio, television, and film productions, would generate an average of 2.6 hours of content-rich television or radio programming, each drawing an average of 4.8 million viewers and listeners.
- Each additional *Museum or Historical Organization Exhibition* would reach an average of 2.7 venues, attracting more than 339,000 visitors per exhibit.
- Each additional *Library Project* represents another local community reached by NEH.

Research and Fellowships

The Alliance recommends an increase of \$3.9 million for the NEH Research Division, bringing the budget up from \$13 to \$16.9 million for FY 2003. This division supports basic research, and contributes to faculty development, improved teaching, and quality public programming in the humanities across the country. *Fellowships and Stipends* support focused, sustained work by individual scholars, for projects that will: advance specialized areas of research, stimulate scholarship in related fields, inform the teaching of humanities subjects at all levels, and provide the foundation for public programs in the humanities. *Collaborative Research* grants support long-term, complex projects carried out by groups of scholars, including the preparation of documentary and literary editions, large-scale translation projects, archaeological research, wide-ranging studies of important topics in the humanities, and fellowship programs at centers for advanced study in the humanities. Additional funding would further enable these programs.

- *Fellowships and Stipends* are an extremely effective way to support excellent humanities research and professional development for faculty. On average, one-third of awards in a given year result in a major publication within five years; most reach publication in subsequent years; over the years, awards have resulted in the publication of more than 2,600 books, including ten Pulitzer Prize winners.
- *Collaborative Research* projects are making significant contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the world. Recent projects are increasingly making use of advanced technologies to produce their results in readily accessible, digital format.

Thank you for your past support and consideration of this request.

Sincerely Yours,

John Hammer
Director and CEO
National Humanities Alliance