Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Simpson:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee $230 million in funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 in an effort towards restoring funding for NEH to the FY 1994 level of $258 million, adjusted for inflation. This $75 million increase over the FY 2009 enacted level would help to address essential needs in humanities education and research.

Even with the relatively small amount of funding provided to the endowment, NEH is the single most important source of support for the humanities. Each year, NEH grants support strengthened institutional capacity, jobs, and professional development for thousands of scholars, educators, curators, librarians, public historians, museum professionals, filmmakers and others around the country. Their work is at the heart of efforts to conserve and nurture America's heritage, bring the humanities to the community, and educate the next generation of Americans.

Unfortunately, current demand for humanities project support far exceeds funding available. Each year, as billions of dollars are rightfully invested in research and education in science and technology, the relative federal investment in the humanities falls further behind. In FY 2008, only 16% of competitive, peer-reviewed NEH project proposals were funded, compared to a 26% funding rate for merit-reviewed projects at the National Science Foundation. We cannot allow this gap to continue to grow. The requested increase would help close the opportunity gap by providing $40 million for national competitive humanities grant programs, creating parity in the success rate of humanities and science-based grants.

This request would also bolster support for the state humanities councils, which work in partnership with the NEH to reach millions of Americans each year through teacher institutes, literacy initiatives, programs on local history and culture, and support for local cultural and educational groups, community groups, and scholars. A recent survey of state humanities council resources and capacities reveals that councils would need an additional $150 million to meet the need for programs and infrastructure support in their states. With the requested additional funds, state humanities councils would receive $25 million for operating grants to expand their reach and address unmet needs.
Increased funding would also provide about $10 million for NEH to introduce or expand support in several areas where federal leadership is critically needed, such as international education and global society perspectives (at all levels of learning), digital humanities projects, graduate education, and data collection and dissemination of information on the state of the humanities.

We are aware of the many difficult choices your Subcommittee faces in crafting its FY 2010 bill, especially in our current economic downturn, but we believe that strong federal support for the humanities is an important investment in the lives of our fellow citizens, the well-being of our democracy, and our nation’s continued status as a world leader. As the legislation that established the NEH forty years ago states, "An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future."

We appreciate your past support of NEH and urge you to provide a robust increase in FY 2010 funding for the endowment to advance the nation’s study and understanding of history, literature, foreign language, and other subject in this diverse and essential field of study.

Sincerely,

David Price
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Humanities Caucus

Thomas E. Petri
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Humanities Caucus

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

David Loebsack
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress

Michael A. Arcuri
Member of Congress

Betsy Markey
Member of Congress
John D. Dingell  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

David Wu  
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

James L. Oberstar  
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress

Ed Whitfield  
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Frank A. LoBiondo  
Member of Congress

Bob Filner  
Member of Congress

Jim Matheson  
Member of Congress
Lois Capps  
Member of Congress

Robert Wexler  
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

Robert E. Andrews  
Member of Congress

Sam Farr  
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez  
Member of Congress

Bob Ether  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Gary C. Peters  
Member of Congress

Melvin L. Watt  
Member of Congress

Robert C. Scott  
Member of Congress

Bart Gordon  
Member of Congress

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

Nick J. Rahall, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne  
Member of Congress

Frank D. Lucas  
Member of Congress
Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Mazie K. Hirono  
Member of Congress

Allyson Y. Schwartz  
Member of Congress

Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Bob Etheridge  
Member of Congress

Shelley Berkley  
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

Christopher S. Murphy  
Member of Congress

Russ Carnahan  
Member of Congress

Gregorio Sablan  
Member of Congress

Timothy J. Walz  
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud  
Member of Congress

Madeleine Z. Bordallo  
Member of Congress

Dennis Moore  
Member of Congress
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress

David Scott  
Member of Congress

Mary Jo Kilroy  
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

Paul W. Hodes  
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

Pete Fortney Stark  
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano  
Member of Congress

Charles A. Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Jim Gerlach  
Member of Congress

Neil Abercrombie  
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress
John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Dale E. Kildee
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress

Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress

Joe Sestak
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Emmanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Ike Skelton
Member of Congress

Judy Biggert
Member of Congress

Vic Snyder
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress
Mike Ross
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress

Todd Russell Platt
Member of Congress

Ellen O. Tauscher
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Howard Coble
Member of Congress

Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress

Henry C. Johnson
Member of Congress

David G. Reichert
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Lee Terry
Member of Congress