

Ohio Humanities Matters: 2017 Talking Points

As Congress considers the President's budget, which eliminates funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities, we strongly encourage you to speak out about the importance of the NEH and Ohio Humanities. With that in mind, below are the major points to emphasize in letters, emails, or phone calls to members of Congress.

The Federation of State Humanities Councils is asking Congress to *increase* support for the National Endowment for the Humanities and to provide \$155 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities and \$46 million for the state humanities councils in FY 2018 and to vigorously oppose any efforts to eliminate the agency.

1) Share the value of Ohio Humanities grants and programming in our state

Programs supported by Ohio Humanities make a real difference in the lives of Ohioans. We foster lifelong learning, an educated citizenry, and help Ohioans engage in civil conversation about real issues. In short, what we do matters. A lot.

Some key points to make:

- Ohio Humanities provides programs that enable Ohioans to engage in civil conversation over issues they care about. We use the humanities (history, philosophy, literature, law, religion) to provide opportunities to talk with each other.
- Between our media grants and public programming every Ohioan has access to Ohio Humanities programming.
- All Ohio Humanities programs, and most of the projects funded through grants, are free and open to the public.
- We are the only funder in the state that focuses primarily on lifelong learning for adults. Without Ohio Humanities, adults in our state will be missing key opportunities to engage in real conversation over real issues.

The best way to make the case is through stories: A grant we funded; a life altered through Justice Talking; the capacity building in local communities through Ohio Chautauqua - there are countless stories to tell.

Share your story – how has Ohio Humanities impacted you?

2) Building Democracy

Federal funding for public humanities programs is an investment supporting democracy in our local communities, our state and our nation. When people understand shared culture and values, they are more likely to uphold American ideals and institutions. Ohio Humanities creates opportunities for real conversation about real issues, thus investing in democracy and civil society.

3) Investing in Ohio

Funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities, and thus Ohio Humanities, is about investing. Ohio Chautauqua builds long-term capacity in communities across the state. The NEH appropriation supporting Ohio Humanities spurs economic development and creates lasting partnerships that have the power to build Ohio communities.

We do all of this for less than \$.09 per Ohioan.

NEH funding is not a waste of tax-payer dollars. Funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and Ohio Humanities is not driving the federal deficit (the NEH percentage of the federal budget is just 0.003% of the total federal budget). Eliminating NEH funding will not reduce the federal deficit nor will it in any way help to make America great.

4) Return on Investment

Ohio Humanities receives no funding from the State of Ohio. Yet, Ohio Humanities partners leverage our support to raise money from public and private sources. On average, for every \$1 Ohio Humanities awards, partners match that support with \$4 of local gifts and services.

5) Thank Congressional Supporters

We have many supporters in Congress. Since 1972, the majority of Ohio's congressional delegation -- both Democrats and Republicans -- have supported NEH funding and the work of Ohio Humanities. Please publicly thank all who serve Ohio in Congress and express gratitude for their support.

We understand you may experience frustration with members of Congress who have not historically supported NEH funding. We get that. However, negative comments about individual members of Congress are not helpful. Focus on the long-standing bipartisan support that Ohio's delegation has shown for the NEH and for Ohio Humanities.