April 4, 2014

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Moran
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member Moran:

We are writing to thank the Subcommittee for its past support of funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and to respectfully request your continued support for NEH in fiscal year (FY) 2015.

As you know, NEH is the primary source of federal support for humanities research, teaching, preservation, public programming, and related activities in the U.S. The Endowment provides competitive grant funding for research and scholarship in history, literature, foreign languages, and other fields that provide individuals with critical ethical, cultural, and historical perspective. Additionally, NEH funding allocated through state humanities councils strengthens the cultural infrastructure of local communities in every state and territory across the nation.

Investment in the humanities advances vital U.S. interests by fostering a globally competitive workforce, strengthening civic engagement, preserving our cultural heritage, and protecting our national security. As our world becomes increasingly more interconnected, building a solid foundation in the humanities becomes even more vital to U.S. interests. That’s why the majority of our CIA analysts, State Department officials and staff members and diplomats at embassies across the globe are graduates of the humanities – as are leaders ranging from the late Steve Jobs to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey to Nobel Laureate and National Cancer Center Director Harold Varmus!

NEH has been an outstanding steward of the relatively small amount of federal support it receives annually. Between 1965 and 2009, NEH successfully leveraged more than $2 billion in non-federal support, including private and institutional contributions. However, current demand for humanities project support far exceeds funding availability and non-federal support for the humanities has declined sharply in recent years, in part due to the current economic downturn. 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.
We are aware of the many difficult choices your Subcommittee faces in crafting its FY 2015 bill, but we believe that strong federal support for the humanities is needed now more than ever to preserve America's place as a world leader in education and innovation for all fields of learning and help provide our nation's citizenry and workforce with the foundation necessary to tackle the challenges of today's globalized world. We appreciate your past support of NEH and strongly urge your support for this request.

Sincerely,

David Price
Katherine Clark
Corrine Brown
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Sheila Jackson Lee
Elijah E. Cummings
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.

Thomas E. Petri
Jerrold Nadler
Stephen F. Lynch
Danny K. Davis
Eliot L. Engel
John F. Tierney
Keith Ellison