April 20, 2011

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Moran:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee to provide funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) at the fiscal year (FY) 2010 enacted level of $167.5 million for FY 2012.

As you know, NEH is the primary source of federal support for humanities research 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 across the nation.

Investment in the humanities advances critical 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 more interconnected, building a solid foundation in the humanities becomes even more vital to U.S. interests – that’s why virtually all of our CIA analysts, State Department officials and diplomats at embassies across the globe are graduates of the humanities.

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 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 2012 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

Dale Kildee

Peter DeFazio