

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

[[DATE]]

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman

House Appropriations Committee

1036 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

Ranking Member

House Appropriations Committee

1036 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write to you today to request that funding to support America's Semiquincentennial ceremonies be prioritized for the Fiscal Year 2025. 2026 will mark America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, providing our government, through the independent federal agencies and departments tasked with carrying out celebratory ceremonies, an unrivaled opportunity to renew Americans' appreciation and understanding of our nation's history.

The 250th anniversary arrives at a critical moment. Americans' knowledge of history and civics has declined significantly in recent years. The Nation's Report Card released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in May 2023, indicated serious deficiencies in eighth graders' understanding of U.S. history and civics. NAEP scores declined five points from 2018 to 2022, landing a full 30 points below the level of "proficiency," a continuation of a decade-long slide. Additionally, the Institute for Citizens & Scholars, another nonpartisan research group, found that only about one in three Americans possess the knowledge of history and civics required to pass the national citizenship test. Meanwhile, research from the American Association for State and Local History found that most Americans think history is simply a hobby for enthusiasts, rather than a subject relevant to everyone. This concerning decline in

historical and civic knowledge coincides with a growing lack of national pride among younger Americans.

In the face of these challenges, the Semiquincentennial anniversary provides departments and agencies like the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, Department of the Interior, National Archives and Records Administration, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, an opportunity to cater their collections and resources towards not just educating, but fully engaging Americans on our shared history. Because of this, we request that funding be prioritized for the following America 250 programs; the IMLS' "America 250 Activities", the National Endowment for the Arts' "America 250 Activities", the National Endowment for the Humanities' "A More Perfect Union; America at 250", the Department of the Interior's "Semiquincentennial Preservation Grants", the National Archive and Records Administration's "Preservation and Publication of Records that Document American History", and the US Semiquincentennial Commission. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important request.

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