

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
February 2 – 4, 2010
Washington, D.C.**

**Report: Preserving the American Historical Record (PAHR)
(Prepared by Council Liaison Brenda Lawson)**

Representatives Maurice Hinchey (D-NY-22) and John McHugh (R-NY-23) reintroduced the PAHR bill (HR 2256) in the House of Representatives on May 5, 2009. As reported by Sue Hodson in August 2009, the major push of the Joint Task Force since then has been to obtain co-sponsors for the House legislation. Task Force Chair Kathleen Roe has been the driving force in drafting and placing promotional messages to CoSA and SAA members at least monthly throughout the fall and winter.

For example, in October she drafted and the Task Force issued via various media the following message (excerpted, with call to action included):

October is American Archives Month – a time when archivists nationwide celebrate the value of archives and historical records. The condition of records, the environments in which they're stored, the status of funding, and the support for archives programs in this country is all too often, well, FRIGHTFUL!

We can help change that by uniting in a strong advocacy effort to urge Congress to support the "Preserving the American Historical Record" Act.

The message was then updated as follows and reissued:

October 30 marked a national day of advocacy, but we still need your help! Participate by contacting your member of Congress and informing him or her of the frightening conditions in your repository, your region, or your state.

The following message was issued on November 30 via CoSA's Archives and Archivists Leader List (AALL):

(Posted on Behalf of Kathleen Roe)

Would you please circulate the following Action Alert to your constituents? We very much need to have over 50 co-sponsors for PAHR by the end of this calendar year--it will make the difference between getting the PAHR bill up for a vote in 2010, or having to start all over again in 2011. So please encourage your colleagues, friends, and users to fax letters and make calls (in particular calls!) to your Congressional offices in support of PAHR.

We need everyONE!

And many, many thanks for all you've done to date.

Kathleen

Action Alert

Remember those dreaded word problems in math class? Here's one for archives and historical records:

Question: If 17 States have convinced 44 representatives to sign on as co-sponsors for the Preserving the American Historical Record bill (HR 2256) and the remaining 33 States plus 6 Territories each get one representative to sign on to the PAHR bill...how many sponsors will PAHR have?

Answer: Enough sponsors to bring the bill up for a vote in the House in 2010!

Every number is made up of an accumulation of ONEs.

Can you get ONE person from your Congressional delegation to co-sponsor the bill? We need every state to share the responsibility to enact PAHR. If we share the responsibility, everyone can share the results--\$50,000,000 a year! Every ONE counts. Every ONE can do something.

Will you:

- * Make one call to your representative's office?
- * Send one fax to your representative's office?
- * Make one visit to your representative's district office?

Co-sponsors are already signed on from:

Arizona
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Illinois
Iowa
Kentucky
Massachusetts
Nevada
New Jersey
New York
Ohio
Pennsylvania
Tennessee
Texas
Virginia
Wisconsin

If your state or territory is not on this list, then can YOU be the ONE to take action? And if your state is listed here, can YOU try ONE more time to bring on ONE more sponsor from your state? There is only ONE way we will succeed-when we work together!

For supporting information, templates, tips on contacting Congress, see the PAHR information at www.archivists.org/pahr

It's ONE small step for each individual but ONE giant step for historical records funding!

Both the Issues and Advocacy Roundtable and the Reference, Access, and Outreach Roundtable picked up on these messages and redistributed them to their members.

And the following message was issued on January 5:

The Status of PAHR in the New Year

In the House:

The Preserving the American Historical Record bill (H.R. 2256) was introduced in May 2009. As of December 31, 48 co-sponsors have signed on to the bill and it has been referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on Information Policy, the Census, and the National Archives. Both Committee and Subcommittee staff have said they're interested in seeing the bill move, but all agree that we must have at least 50 co-sponsors in order to demonstrate that the bill has sufficient support to be brought up for consideration.

In the Senate:

Senator Orrin Hatch (R, UT) has agreed to introduce the bill, and with the reconvening of the 111th Congress, Senator Hatch's staff and our colleagues in several key states are talking with their Democratic Senators to see if we can get the critical co-lead. We hope to have this accomplished in the next week, and will keep you informed.

With two lead sponsors, we'll need a few key Senators to sign on as original sponsors. We'll contact several of you soon to ask for your help. The lead sponsors will introduce the bill in the Senate and then send out a "Dear Colleague" letter to solicit more sponsors. Once that letter is sent, we'll ask you to reach out to your Senators to encourage their action. Once introduced, the bill will be referred to the Committee on Homeland Security for consideration.

Timing is of the essence for moving the bill in the House and Senate:

We need to get this bill moving early in the year (February-March) if we are going to get to a vote. The President's budget is released in late February and that will trigger a lot of activity. We must get the bill moving in the relevant Committees and Subcommittees during this period.

Here's What You Can Do Now!

If you've contacted the members of your state's delegation in the House and they haven't signed on as co-sponsors, please contact them again! Understandably they may have been distracted by the health care debates at the end of the year and the reminder is helpful and not unexpected. (They hear from constituents all the time and expect to be "nagged.") Fax a reminder letter-- or, even better, call the regional or Washington DC office and ask your member of Congress to review your request and get back to you about it. Be sure to tell him or her to contact Michael Iger in Congressman Hinchey's office (Michael.iger@mail.house.gov, 202-225-6335) to sign up.

We'll alert you as soon as movement begins in the Senate. At that time, it will again be critical that faxes, email, calls, and visits take place as soon as possible. So get your letters, background information, and phone numbers ready to go!

As of January 15, we have 50 co-sponsors in the House – and have overcome the major hurdle of obtaining at least 50 in order “to be taken seriously” by the members and staff of the House Subcommittee and Committee responsible for the legislation.

For more on PAHR, see the PAHR web page (maintained on the SAA website) at <http://www.archivists.org/pahr/index.asp>.