



**NEW YORK  
STATE**

**BOARD OF  
REGENTS**

—

**FEDERAL**

**LEGISLATIVE**

*and*

**FUNDING**

**PRIORITIES**

**2009**



## **PRESERVING THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL RECORD (PAHR) ACT**



The nation recognizes the importance of preserving *federal* documents, archives, and history through support for national institutions like the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institution. However, this support does not address other vital archives being held by governments, historical societies, and libraries at the state and local levels.

It is essential that resources be directed to states and localities to ensure that documents and archival records at the state and local levels are preserved and can be accessed by teachers, students, researchers and the general public.

Organizations managing these essential records face many challenges, from fire and hurricanes to mold and mildew, from decaying materials to outdated electronic media. This part of the American record needs attention now to ensure that the documents, records, and collections of our state and local histories are cared for and available to everyone for generations to come.

In New York State, there are over 3,000 local archives, historical societies, libraries and historical organizations and 4,300 local governments responsible for gathering, maintaining, and sharing records of individuals, groups, and events of importance to local communities, the state and the nation.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

► **Enact the Preserving the American Historical Record (PAHR) Act** – bipartisan legislation sponsored by Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Rep. John McHugh (R-NY)

The PAHR Act would increase federal support for state and local archival records held by state and local governments, historical societies, libraries, and related organizations. Funding under the PAHR Act would supplement, not replace funding for the National Archives and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for preserving documents at the federal level.

Base funding would be provided to each state and territory, with additional funding distributed using a population/area-based formula. State and localities would be required to provide a 50 percent match.

## **PAHR Act (con't)**

PAHR would be authorized for \$50 million in each fiscal year for five years. If fully funded, New York would receive \$2.8 million in critical support.

### Overall funding would support:

- Actions to protect historical records from harm, prolong their life, and preserve them for public use, including digitization projects, electronic records initiatives, and disaster preparedness and recovery
- Initiatives to use historical records in new and creative ways to convey the importance of state, territorial, and community history, including the development of teaching materials for K–12 and postsecondary students, active participation in National History Day, and support for life-long learning opportunities
- Creation of a wide variety of access tools, including archival finding aids, documentary editions, indexes, and images of key records online
- Programs to provide education and training to archivists and others who care for historical records, ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their important responsibilities

### PAHR funding in New York State could support projects that:

- Provide access for teachers and students to an online educational site of lessons using archival records that support the State Education Department's learning standards
- Provide access for researchers to a New York online digital collection of historic photographs, documents and maps
- Provide family historians with searchable online name indexes for military service, land ownership, naturalization and the New York state census

### ***For additional information:***

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