

**Council of State Archivists (CoSA) Statement on Presidential Records**

Recent reporting on the mishandling, destruction, and unauthorized removal of government records by former President Trump underscores the importance of safeguarding the materials that document government actions and ensure the accountability of public officials.

Since 1978, the Presidential Records Act has clearly established the responsibility of the Office of the President for proper management of records throughout an administration and the transfer of records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at the end of a President’s term. Failure to fulfill this responsibility undermines the integrity of the nation’s historical record and risks the unauthorized disclosure of highly sensitive information.

These episodes serve as timely reminders of the important work performed daily by NARA on behalf of the nation. From records management advice and assistance to federal agencies, to assisting researchers with historical, genealogical, or other research, to preserving federal records that help document our society and government, NARA’s mission is essential to the health of our constitutional democracy.

The current Archivist of the United States will be retiring in the spring, and it is crucial that the next appointee understand the management of federal and presidential records and be an effective champion of NARA’s role in documenting the federal government.

3/2022