



DOCUMENTING GOVERNMENT

PROMOTING HISTORY

SECURING RIGHTS

September 15, 2022

The Hon. Gary Peters
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Rob Portman
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for Confirmation of the Nominee for 11th Archivist of the United States

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, and Members of the Committee:

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) respectfully submits the following comments for consideration by the Committee as it takes up the confirmation of the next Archivist of the United States.

CoSA is a professional nonprofit organization of the official government repositories of the fifty states, five territories, and the District of Columbia. CoSA members are the state-level counterparts of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). State archives perform parallel functions for preservation of and access to government records documenting the rights of citizens, assuring government accountability, and connecting all Americans with our individual and shared histories.

CoSA leadership has reviewed Dr. Colleen Shogan's professional qualifications and has had the occasion to have purposeful interaction with her since the nomination announcement. Her diverse professional experience in libraries, academia, and government and nonprofit institutions is an asset for leading NARA by strengthening its core functions as the nation's administrator of government records law and contributing to public dialogue on our constitutional democracy.

CoSA heartily supports Dr. Shogan's confirmation and is optimistic about the future of NARA under her leadership.

CoSA's membership believes that there are three key areas that should weigh heavily in the Committee's consideration of Dr. Shogan: the relationship of NARA to the state archives for advancing archival innovation and best practices in the 21st century; the importance of

maintaining and properly administering strong government records laws; and the essential role of NARA and other repositories in supporting the 250th anniversary of the nation in 2026.

Under our nation's system of federalism, states retain distinctive responsibility for archival and records functions. State agencies routinely interact with federal programs such as national defense, veterans' affairs, interstate commerce, education, and emergency preparedness. The state-federal relationship requires collaboration between NARA and the state archives to ensure best practices in records management and records preservation.

Government archival programs share significant challenges in the development of standards for the preservation of digital records. NARA must be the leader in making important advances in the preservation and management of digital records. A stronger federal-state partnership through CoSA will facilitate the persistence of reliable historical records through technological advances in records management. Dr. Shogan recognizes this need and is ready to initiate a culture of greater collaboration with reciprocal benefits to the American people.

NARA is responsible for implementing the records laws enacted by Congress. Federal records laws are clearly established to protect public interests. Records that document government functions belong to the American people, and records laws should be implemented without regard to party or politics. NARA's highest calling is to ensure the integrity of government records and the proper administration of confidentiality and access. Dr. Shogan has indicated her commitment to upholding the duty of the Archivist of the United States to apply records laws with integrity.

In 2026, the United States will mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the nation. As we begin the nation's next 250 years, the historical records preserved by NARA and the state and territorial archives are essential to understanding the American experience. NARA and its holdings play an essential role in the national conversation about who we are as a people, what we value, and how our young people should be equipped to inherit the responsibility of citizenship. Dr. Shogan shares these priorities and will lead NARA in its relevance in American life by promoting engagement with the general public and the K-12 community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share perspectives from the state and territorial government archives in support of Dr. Colleen Shogan as the 11th Archivist of the United States.

Most sincerely,



Joy M. Banks
Executive Director
Council of State Archivists