



# Council of State Archivists

Documenting government · Promoting history · Securing rights

---

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) shares the commitment of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to the preservation and use of archival holdings without alteration of records. It further acknowledges that mistakes do occur, such as in the recent incident of NARA using an altered image for promoting an exhibition. CoSA and its members do not condone exceptions to accepted archival practice, standards, and ethics, including alterations of records for exhibitions or other educational or promotional purposes.

CoSA appreciates that NARA quickly acknowledged its mistake and announced its intent to replace the altered image with the original image. CoSA also endorses NARA's decision to review its policies and procedures to ensure against any future occurrence of altered images or documents. We hope NARA will be swift and transparent in this process, and then take a leadership position in discussing archival and museum practice related to these issues.

CoSA appreciates NARA's decision to strengthen its processes to preserve and provide access to government records, and to review its exhibition design methodology. CoSA supports NARA as it reinforces its commitment that the authenticity of the American historical record will not be compromised.

CoSA encourages all members of the public to visit government repositories and to learn more about the missions they fulfill and the records they hold on behalf of the public.

--Approved by the CoSA Executive Committee,  
January 21, 2020

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) is a nonprofit membership organization of the state and territorial government archives in the fifty states, five territories, and District of Columbia. Through collaborative research, education, and advocacy, CoSA provides leadership that strengthens and supports state and territorial archives in their work to preserve and provide access to government records. CoSA facilitates networking, information sharing, and project collaboration among its member organizations to help state and territorial government archives with their responsibilities for protecting the rights and historical documents of the American people. Read more at [www.statearchivists.org](http://www.statearchivists.org).