

Measure Would Authorize \$50 Million To Protect and Provide Access To Historical Records Across U.S.

Washington, DC - In an effort to safeguard American historical records and make them more accessible to the public, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) this week introduced a bill in the House that would authorize \$50 million annually for preservation activities. Hinchey's Preserving the American Historical Record Act, which has bipartisan support, would also use those resources to make records more available to the public.

"From the local to the federal level, this country's history is well-documented in a variety of ways, but those documents and materials are often not maintained in a way that keeps them in good shape and enables people of all ages to examine and learn from them," Hinchey said. "This bill will provide the resources needed to effectively preserve our country's historical documents in ways that will make them more accessible to the public for generations upon generations to come."

The Preserving the American Historical Record Act would authorize \$50 million to preserve and provide access to historical records by supporting:

- The creation of a wide variety of access tools, including archival finding aids, documentary editions, indexes, and images of key records online;
- Preservation 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

college students, active participation in National History Day, and support for life-long learning opportunities; and

- 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.

The Council of State Archivists, the Society of American Archivists, and the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administration fully support Hinchey's legislation and are prepared to help coordinate this initiative if the bill is approved and signed into law. Base funding would be provided to each state or territory, with the remainder of funding distributed using a population/area-based formula. A 50 percent match for any funding awards would be required of state and local partners.