



Robert C. Byrd Center
for CONGRESSIONAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION

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The Robert C. Byrd Center will partner with West Virginia University Libraries on a National Endowment for the Humanities Award.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded the West Virginia University Libraries nearly \$60,000.00 to the “The American Congress Digital Archives Portal Project.” The Byrd Center will be a collaborating institution for this project along with the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas. The goal is to create the first-ever online portal bringing together congressional archives from repositories throughout the United States.

Unlike presidential papers, which are centralized in one location with dedicated staff and funding, congressional collections are geographically dispersed among institutions large and small with varying degrees of resources. For researchers, collections may be difficult to use, both because of a lack of travel funding and the breadth and varying levels of description in congressional archives. The pandemic has made these problems more acute due to archives closures and travel restrictions.

The American Congress Digital Archives Portal project will address these challenges and provide easier access to archives for scholars, educators and the public. The project will give open access to congressional archives by bringing together sources from multiple institutions into a single online platform, illuminating the value of each collection and the relationships among them. The portal will include correspondence, memoranda, audiovisual materials, and more.

The Byrd Center holds the papers of five former members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives from West Virginia, spanning over sixty years, including the papers of the United States’ longest-serving Senator, Robert C. Byrd.

This award was made through NEH’s Humanities Collections and Reference Resources program which supports projects that provide an essential underpinning for scholarship, education, and public programming in the humanities. The Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education is a private, nonpartisan, and nonprofit educational organization located on the campus of Shepherd University. Its mission is to advance representative democracy by promoting a better understanding of the United States Congress and the Constitution through programs and research that engage citizens.

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