

Help Save The Georgia State Archives

Update: According to SAA's publication *In the Loop*, the Friends of Georgia Archives and History (FOGAH) reports that the Governor's proposed budget (released January 15, 2014) increases funds allocated to the state archives by nearly \$1.4 million.

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (ART) opposes the \$732,626 in budget cuts that will effectively close the Georgia State Archives on November 1, 2012, and have written the following Letter in Support of Restoring Funding to the Georgia State Archives to Georgia Governor Nathan Deal:



*Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc.
P.O. Box 151 / New York, New York / 10274*

September 18, 2012

*RE: Letter in Support of Restoring Funding to the
Georgia State Archives*

Governor Nathan Deal
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

Founded in 1979, the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization representing a diverse group of more than 575 archivists in the New York City area. As members of the professional community of archivists, we are committed to the welfare of the Georgia State Archives. We are submitting this letter in response to the announcement that the Georgia State Archives budget will be further reduced by \$750,000, thus closing the State Archives to the public and reducing staff to unsustainable levels. We write to urge you to restore a minimum of \$1,000,000 to the Georgia State Archives budget, allowing the Archives to return its operation to five days per week of public access hours and to eliminate the projected staff reductions.

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. strongly opposes the budget cuts to the Georgia State Archives. The ability of any state's citizens to access state records is the norm across the United States. The Georgia Public Records and Open Records Act (50-18-70) states that all public records "shall be open for a personal inspection by any citizen of this state at a reasonable time and

place, and those in charge of such records shall not refuse this privilege to any citizen." This budget decrease will prohibit the citizens of Georgia, as well as elected officials, private organizations and individuals across the country, from openly accessing Georgia's records, including those needed to support due process of law.

The Georgia State Archives has an active mandate to identify, select, preserve, and make accessible records that constitute Georgia's recorded history; to increase the efficiency of State Government through effective records management; and to improve the quality of records and archives management throughout the state. Such a severe budget cut as the one proposed would cripple the Georgia State Archives' ability to fulfill that mandate.

According to Georgia Secretary of State Brian P. Kemp, if this budget reduction is realized, "Georgia will be the only state in the country that will not have a central location in which the public can visit to research and review the historical records of their government and state."The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc.will not stand idly by and allow this to happen. Thesebudget reductions directly threaten transparency in government and in so doing impede the function of a democratic society.

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. urges you to restore funding to the Georgia State Archives. It is imperative that the essential functions of the Georgia StateArchives-to identify, select, preserve, and make accessible records that constitute Georgia's recorded history - are protected, and we call for a minimum \$1,000,000 budget for the Georgia State Archives to support these functions, allowing the collection to remain staffed and freely open for use by researchers five days per week.

Citizens of this nation must continue to have unfettered access to the records of state governments, as this is essential to ensure honest and transparent government.

Sincerely,



Rachel Chatalbash
President

Tiffany Colannino
Advocacy Committee Chair

Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc.

cc:

GeorgiaLieutenant Governor Casey Cagle
Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp
Coalition to Preserve the Georgia Archives Co-ChairKaye Lanning Minchew

The Advocacy Committee encourages all ART members to voice their opposition to the closure of the Georgia State Archives:

- **Sign the petition to the Georgia State Governor: "Leave Our State Archives Open To The Public"**
- **'Like' the Georgians Against Closing State Archives page on Facebook.**
- **Write a letter or postcard to:**

Georgia Governor Nathan Deal

Mailing Address:

206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: 404-656-1776

Fax: 404-657-7332

[Click to submit an online message to Governor Nathan Dale](#)

Georgia Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle

Mailing Address:

240 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone:(404) 656-5030

Fax:(404) 656-6739

[Click to submit an online message to Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle](#)

Georgia Secretary of State Brian P. Kemp

Mailing Address:

214 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone:404-656-2881

Fax:404-656-0513

[Click to submit an online message to Georgia Secretary of State Brian P. Kemp](#)

**Key messages can be found in the "Action Alert."*