



South Dakota Humanities Council
1215 Trail Ridge Road, Suite A
Brookings, SD 57006 - 4107

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2025

Contact: Christina Oey, (605) 222-3377, (605) 688-6113, christina@sdhumanities.org

Federal Cuts Threaten Humanities in South Dakota Statewide Programs Need Citizen Support

The future of the South Dakota Humanities Council (SDHC) is at risk due to DOGE cuts to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). These drastic reductions threaten the very foundation of South Dakota's history and culture – what makes our state special.

For decades, NEH funding has been the backbone of SDHC's mission, allowing us to bring humanities-based programs, discussions, and events, including the South Dakota Festival of Books, to citizens across the state. Over the past 53 years, SDHC has funded thousands of programs in every county in South Dakota. We take pride in bringing excellent programs to all of South Dakota, especially people in rural areas.

Among the most devastating losses is the potential end of the Young Readers program, which provides free books to every third grader in South Dakota. SDHC is the only organization in South Dakota that provides a free book to EVERY third grader in the state, no matter where they live or attend school. Since 2014, SDHC has provided 86,715 engaging, age-appropriate books, compliments of the supporters of South Dakota Humanities.

In a joint statement, SDHC Executive Director Christina Oey and Board Chair Stephen Williamson called on lawmakers, educators, and citizens to take immediate action to strongly request the restoration of NEH funding.

"We look forward to engaging directly with Senate Majority Leader Thune, Senator Rounds, and Representative Johnson on funding issues for the Humanities," they said. "Whether it be issues around agriculture, veterans, or the arts and humanities, our representation has always had the backs of South Dakotans. Like our national representatives, SDHC believes in South Dakota, its story, and its people. We'll pivot as necessary, but like the Missouri River, the Great Plains and the Black Hills, we aren't going to run away from this challenge."

Humanities are not a luxury—they are a necessity.

For more information on how you can support the South Dakota Humanities Council, please visit www.sdhumanities.org.

ABOUT SDHC

The non-profit [South Dakota Humanities Council](http://www.sdhumanities.org), founded in 1972, delivers humanities programming to South Dakotans. As a steward of the state's heritage, the Council promotes the

exchange of ideas to foster a thoughtful and engaged society and the appreciation of South Dakota history, literature and the humanities. The council works through grant-making and cultural programs, including the [South Dakota Festival of Books](#) and [One Book South Dakota](#). Learn more at [SDHumanities.org](#).

---END---