Senate Committee on Higher Education
The Honorable Stephanie Kunze, Chairwoman
FY 2020-21 Senate Budget Testimony
Burt Logan, Executive Director & CEO
April 30, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Kunze and members of the Higher Education Committee:

I am Burt Logan, Executive Director and CEO of the Ohio History Connection. As you know, the Ohio History Connection has a longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship with the State of Ohio dating back to 1885. As the state's official history partner, state funding (GRF and state capital dollars) makes up about two-thirds of our annual budget. When the state invests in its history, it positions us to generate additional philanthropic and other non-state dollars for what we do—tell Ohio's story.

I often characterize what we do as the state's nonprofit history partner this way… The Ohio Revised Code gives us a wide variety of public history assignments that we carry out for Ohio and Ohioans in exchange for state GRF support. With your support, the Ohio History Connection bundles these into five primary responsibilities:

- We operate and provide public access to the state's archives, which we do through our Cultural Resources Division;
- We are responsible for maintaining the state's historic sites and museums, which is also performed by our Cultural Resources Division;
- We promote history education statewide by working with schools (K-16), social studies teachers and local history organizations all across the state, which we do through our Outreach Division;
- We have an important role in protecting and facilitating the long-term preservation of Ohio's historic buildings and landscapes, which we do through the State Historic Preservation Office whose tax credit programs have been the catalyst for significant Ohio job creation; and
- Finally, we are pleased to operate the state museum at the Ohio History Center where we showcase Ohio's world-class history and artifact collection as well as offer a diverse range of public programming.

Our headquarters at the Ohio History Center—with its strong and assertive Brutalist-style architecture—is nearing its 50th birthday. This coming anniversary gives us the opportunity to not only reflect on the building's past, but to plan for the future of our campus at the corner of 17th Avenue and I-71.

We often say that history is a growth business. It accumulates every year. We moved into the Ohio History Center in 1970. Nearly 50 years later, we're facing the problem of running out of space. Our collections storage facilities are about a mile away at Hudson Road and Silver Drive. I hope you will join us for a tour of the cramped and, frankly, unsuitable spaces so you can better grasp the need for expanded and modern facilities. The buildings are converted warehouses where we have stored Ohio's priceless historic, archaeological and natural history collections since the early 1980s. Back then, they were meant to be merely a temporary solution. That was more than 35 years ago!

The nature of these buildings seriously limits public access. Each of the objects in our care is significant. Looking to the future, they should be located on the campus of the Ohio History Center, in a secure and accessible environment. Our vision and plan is to make that a reality soon.

Having commented on the *quantity* of Ohio's history, let me now speak for a moment about the *quality* of Ohio's history. Our Civil War and archaeological artifact collections are recognized as world-class. Although Ohio is just 34th in geographic size, only New York and Massachusetts have more properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. But why just think nationally? We have sites in Ohio that are internationally significant. The ancient American Indian earthworks – built 2,000 years ago that are preserved at the Newark Earthworks in Licking County, Fort Ancient in Warren County and at the National Park Service's Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Ross County are making their way toward inscription on the World Heritage List, the highest and most esteemed designation possible. There are only 23 U.S. sites on the World Heritage List – and so far, none of them are in Ohio. We anticipate inscription occurring in the next couple of years and will be a great achievement not only for Ohio history, but will increase the economic vitality in these regions as we capitalize on increased visitation and the marketing opportunities that come with this important milestone.

The Ohio History Connection has been building momentum, meeting and exceeding goals as well as serving the needs of our visitors. Here are some highlights of recent accomplishments:

▪ In March we opened the largest special exhibit ever at the Ohio History Center, *Ohio – Champion of Sports*. This is a bright, high-energy retrospective of Ohio's leadership in the context of the national sports story. Sports is, of course, just one of numerous areas of endeavors where Ohio has led the nation. The exhibit is organized around six themes: Victory; Adversity; Innovation; Identity; Character and Tradition. Experiencing Ohio Champion of Sports, you may meet athletes and their accomplishments that are new to you. You will also learn new things about Ohio men and women who, through their competitive spirit and stunning achievements, are known to the world, athletic greats like Jesse Owens, Jack Nicklaus and LeBron James. Please come out and see this very special showcase of Ohio athleticism.

▪ In 2016—to mark the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act—the Ohio History Connection launched what is becoming a popular statewide heritage event: we call it *Ohio Open Doors*. We repeated it in September 2018 and, despite soggy weather, it was a roaring success. Ohio Open Doors is a 10-day period in which local Ohio landmarks—important historic buildings and sites of all kinds—are invited to "open

their doors "to the public, offering special tours or unique programming to visitors at no charge. Last fall, 264 participating venues registered. This number is nearly twice what it was in 2016. The breadth of topics increased as did the number of Ohio counties represented (74 in 2018 as opposed to 49 in 2016). Ohio Open Doors is very expansive. While it included in 2018 some Ohio History Connection sites, the bulk of venues came from local history groups or operators of other local arts, cultural, governmental, commercial, and agricultural landmarks. Ohio Open Doors is engaging the public and getting individuals and families to connect with landmarks, many for the first time. It is one of the many ways Ohio history is flourishing across the state.

▪ Anniversaries often provide great opportunities to reconnect the public to state and local history. This year is the 50th anniversary of Neil Armstrong's moon landing and the community of Wapakoneta and the Armstrong Air & Space Museum will be ready with a full slate of summer activities reminding the world why Ohio is called "the birthplace of aviation!" This year and next we will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage that was adopted by Ohio in 1919 and nationally in 1920 in time for the election of Ohio's own Warren G. Harding. Speaking of Harding, we recently broke ground at the Harding Home in Marion where a new presidential center to complement the Home will open in time for that centennial event next year.

▪ On the educational front, *Ohio As America* is the first truly electronic state history textbook in the nation. Version 2.0 launched in 2016 and has become a hit – it is currently used by more than 33,000 Ohio 4th graders. This is not simply a PDF document posted online, but a true interactive educational tool that includes assessments, videos, maps, lesson plans, and other colorful, exciting features. Not only is *Ohio as America* a more engaging textbook, but its electronic format provides schools with the resources and technology they need to excel. This continues to be one of our great success stories.

▪ We're also the statewide coordinator for Ohio History Day, a national program that gets 10,000 or so Ohio students pumped up and directly involved in *doing* history. Students choose a topic, tied to an annual theme, and conduct in-depth historical research. This is exciting and thought-provoking content that also promotes good citizenship. The students create historical papers, dramatic performances, creative documentaries, museum-like exhibits and engaging websites. Ohio's top students go on to College Park, Maryland, each summer, to compete at the national level. Ohio students are consistently ranked in the top tier at the national competition.

▪ The Ohio History Fund is supported by non-GRF income-tax refund donations made directly by Ohioans and by specialty license plate sales (line items 360-602 and 360-603). Since the History Fund started in 2012, it has made 73 competitive matching grants in 37 counties for a total of $688,000. However, the Ohio History Fund has received 347 grant applications from 62 counties, totaling almost $4.2 million in requests - proving there is a great need for this grant program. With an average donation of $9, generous Ohioans contribute to important work such as helping repair a roof on a historic home, expanding popular history tours at local museums, creating new history apps for handheld digital devices and making a National Historic Landmark house accessible to all. The more the Ohio History Fund receives in donations, the more grants we can make.

In addition to these initiatives, we continue to perform other important services for the people of Ohio:

▪ At nearly each of our more than 50 historic sites and museums across Ohio, we have a local site manager who works in partnership with our team at the Ohio History Connection. These partners – employees of local organizations – help keep Ohio's local historical sites and museums operating for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come each year. Our budget line item (360-502) for Site & Museum Operations supplies funds that supports, in part, the vital work of our local site partners. This support is essential to the health and vitality of our system of state memorials and historic sites.

▪ The State Archives serves more than 12,000 people each year by making accessible Ohio's archival resources for a variety of purposes ranging from family histories to legal cases and even film and television productions. Research requests come via in-person visits, e-mail, phone, letters and elsewhere from genealogists, students, educators, scholars, lawyers, the media, other history organizations, government offices and simply ordinary people in search of answers to questions. The State Archives and collections care are funded through budget line 360-501 (Education & Historical Collections).

▪ The State Historic Preservation Office, found in budget line 360-504, has a tremendous impact on Ohio's economy by facilitating job creation in communities across the state. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of federal and state historic tax credit projects, properties listed in the National Register as well as the number of Certified Local Governments (local governments that create local historic preservation programs and get support from us in their efforts). These are all signs of healthy growth in preserving the historical assets in our communities while at the same time spurring job creation. Last year, for example, as a result of historic tax credits, 102 rehabilitated historic buildings across Ohio were placed into service to become viable parts of their communities again—102—and Ohio led the country! Also last year, the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit leveraged $513 million in private investment in historic rehabilitation expenses. The Ohio Development Services Agency estimates that in the 10 years since the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit began, the program has created over 74,000 permanent jobs. These are impressive statistics, but we know that we can do even more with additional funding to this line item to increase the outreach and service to smaller, rural communities so that even more places in Ohio can realize the benefits of preserving their communities while revitalizing them and stimulating economic growth.

▪ The National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center located in historic Wilberforce recently celebrated 30 years of collecting, preserving and sharing African American history and culture with the public. The Museum was the first national museum celebrating African American history and culture and created a blueprint that has been followed by numerous cultural institutions around the country ever since. Unfortunately, state GRF support to the Afro-American Museum line item has suffered disproportionately over the past 15+ years, operating at 40% of what its budget once represented. Despite this challenging budget environment, the Afro-American Museum, which has been shifting from a national focus to telling more of an Ohio-specific story, has continued to build its reputation not only around Ohio, but also around the country. It now has collections on display at the Smithsonian's National African American Museum

in Washington, D.C. and has traveled art around Europe, including Paris and London. Most recently, the Museum has agreed to loan art to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for an upcoming exhibit that will be viewed by hundreds of thousands of visitors. The reputation and collections housed and cared for at the Afro-American Museum are among the most valued anywhere in the country. The Museum has become an important training center for aspiring professionals in the field of Public History, including areas of Archives/Library, Collections Management and Curatorial & Exhibit Design. The Afro-American Museum can now boast that over the last six years it has assisted in training about a dozen public history professionals. Many of the area universities now rely on the Museum to provide training and internship opportunities for their students, which in many cases has resulted in traveling exhibits that now tour the state and will benefit numerus communities and visitors.

▪ The Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, located at Spiegel Grove in Fremont, has redesigned its programming to be more educational, thought provoking, and relevant to today's world. In a recent program series, public protests from our nation's past and present were examined and participants asked to discuss their thoughts about the complex intersection of patriotism and protest. New programs for schools have been retooled at the request of teachers. Using lessons learned by Rutherford and Lucy Hayes, such as conflict resolution, these new programs teach good history while helping students develop skills for solving real life problems such as racism, bullying and drug addiction. A series of programs that will begin in July entitled "*Finding Her Voice*" will show the arc of thought and action that resulted in the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, how women's rights and roles have evolved since, and how the women of Spiegel Grove (including a mix of German immigrants and former slaves, as well as a first lady of the United States) influenced and were affected by these movements. As a result, Hayes Presidential is reaching more people with its programming and inspiring them to think about and engage more thoughtfully with the world in which we live. Hayes Presidential continues to grow partnerships with organizations of similar vision and goals, including other presidential sites throughout Ohio and the United States.

To support this resurgence of interest in Ohio History, we depend on our people who work for the Ohio History Connection, approximately 200 professional staff members and 350 active volunteers. We began the 21st century with about 400 staff members and were down as low as 170 staff members at one point, a consequence of severe budget cuts made during the Great Recession. Not surprisingly, about 60 percent of our total expenses are dedicated to payroll and employee benefits. Our staff members are truly dedicated, highly professional and responsive to the needs of Ohio's public, which includes you, your constituents and every Ohioan. We see you and the public as customers to serve and we do so with passion. We are proud of keeping our costs low, too. However, it is important for me to report to you that we are faced with some increased costs. After two years of stable prices we anticipate a sizable jump this summer in the cost of health care benefits.

When we changed our name from the Ohio Historical Society to the Ohio History Connection in 2014, we did so to help emphasize the connectivity that our organization has statewide – connections of which most people were not aware. In addition to all that I have just described, I will briefly touch on just a few more partnerships with some of our state partners:

- ✓ The Development Services Agency is a vital partner for facilitating state historic preservation tax credits.
- ✓ Tourism Ohio, which is within the DSA, is an important partner with us on important initiatives such as World Heritage and the Presidential Trail.
- ✓ The Adjutant General's Office has been a magnificent partner on maintaining the state's battle flag collection, oral histories and other initiatives.
- ✓ The Department of Veterans Services has worked with us on several collaborative projects. In March, they hosted a women's veterans' discussion at the Ohio History Center.
- ✓ ODOT for several years been a partner with us on the Tribal Nations Conference held each fall.
- ✓ Other collaborative efforts include the Ohio Department of Education, the Construction Facilities Commission, the Ohio Arts Council, the State Library, the Department of Administrative Services, the Capitol Square Review & Advisory Board and others.

Thank you for your time and continued support of Ohio history. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the staff, our many partners, our statewide members, and the hundreds of thousands of Ohioans we touch annually, I pledge our full commitment to preserve and share Ohio's incredible story.

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