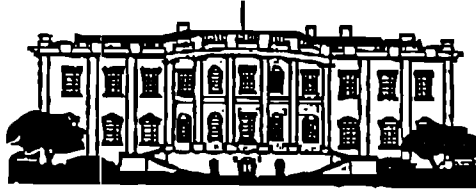


*Handwritten initials/signature*



*Let's send to Bill*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

*?? He sent this to you*

Date: 6/29/99

To: Tom Friedman

From: Bruce Reed

Facsimile: ~~6-5537~~ 6-7431

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Millennium Council Mtg

Pages: 6 (Including this cover sheet)

Comments:

SECOND FLOOR WEST WING ♦ WASHINGTON, DC 20502

TELEPHONE (202) 456-6515 ♦ FACSIMILE (202) 456-2878



**WHITE HOUSE  
MILLENNIUM COUNCIL**

Honor the Past—Imagine the Future

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Vanessa Weaver, Presidential Personnel  
 David Goodfriend, Office of Staff Secretary  
 Michelle Balentine, Office of Chief of Staff  
 Bruce Reed, Domestic Policy Council ✓  
 Shirley Sagawa, Office of the First Lady  
 Dimitri Nionakis, Counsel to the President  
 Betty Monkman, White House Curator  
 Jeff Shesol, Presidential Speechwriting  
 Malcolm Richardson, White House Millennium Council

**From:** Ellen McCulloch Lovell  
 Deputy Assistant to the President and  
 Advisor to the First Lady on the Millennium

**Date:** 6-25-99

**Re:** Organization of American Historians – White House Meeting

I would like to remind you of the meeting that will take place on Tuesday, June 29, 1999 at 2:30pm, 100 OEOB. We will be discussing the request submitted to John Podesta and Ellen Lovell by the Organization of American Historians to have the President issue an Executive Order to establish historic offices in federal agencies that do not currently have them.

Enclosed you will find background materials for the meeting. I look forward to your important contributions to this discussion. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 456-2411.

White House Millennium Council  
 708 Jackson Place, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20503  
 Tel: 202-456-2000 Fax: 202-456-2008

e-mail: millennium@whitehouse.gov  
<http://www.millennium.whitehouse.gov>

*Intro  
 6-27  
 full  
 Paul or Tom*



# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS

Office of the Executive Director

112 North Bryan Avenue • Bloomington, Indiana 47408-4199

Tel: 812-855-7311 • Fax: 812-855-0696

oah@oah.org • <http://www.indiana.edu/~oah>

May 19, 1999

Ms. Ellen Lovell  
The Millennium Program  
708 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Lovell:

I am writing on behalf of the Organization of American Historians to let you know that our Executive Board has strongly endorsed the draft Executive Order on the establishment of historical offices in federal agencies that currently do not have one. As we look forward to the millennium, it is an appropriate time to encourage the preservation and interpretation of the nation's history as it is undertaken by federal agencies.

Federal historical offices not only heighten an awareness of the past but provide a context for imagining the future. Additionally historical offices can prove to be cost effective as they offer, for example, valuable assistance: to agency decision makers by providing comprehensive background material, to personnel offices in helping to orient new staff, and to records managements in identifying those records that should be discarded and those that should be retained.

While a number of agencies now have historical offices, the majority do not. The important work of preserving and documenting an agency's history, providing the expert historical knowledge essential to informed decision making, and producing a broad range of reference and historical materials is often neglected in many agencies.

Thank you again for your time last fall when you met with our delegation of historians to discuss this proposal. Your comments and encouragement have helped us move forward.

Enclosed are some background materials and a copy of the OAH Executive Board's resolution. Please contact me if we can provide additional information or if you would like for us to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

John R. Dichtl  
Assistant Executive Director, OAH

JRD/klh

Enclosures

## DRAFT EXECUTIVE ORDER

*" Resolved, that the Organization of American Historians strongly endorses and supports the draft Executive Order providing for the establishment of historical offices within each executive branch agency. The purpose of this Executive Order is to promote and preserve the documentary and historical record of the Federal Government by ensuring that professional historians and archivists oversee the preservation and documentation pertaining to an agency's history for future generations."*

- Approved by unanimous vote of the OAH Executive Board at the OAH Annual Meeting, April 24, 1999

In accordance with the Executive Order establishing the White House Millennium Council, which states that the Federal Government "has a special responsibility to inspire the American people to reflect upon and commemorate the achievements of this country's past," it is hereby ordered that each executive branch agency without an official historical office shall establish such an office to promote preservation and interpretation of the nation's history for future generations.

### Section 1. Policy.

Leadership of the country in the spirit of the Millennium observance requires professional historical expertise.

I. to "recognize the history and past accomplishments of America that reflect upon the present forces shaping society and that encourage thoughtful planning for the future";

II. to "produce informational and resource materials to educate the American people concerning our Nation's past and to inspire thought concerning the future";

III. and to provide expertise in identifying and evaluating "America's threatened cultural treasures," which include "significant documents, works of art, maps, journals, and historic structures that document and illuminate the history and culture of the United States."

By recognizing this expertise in existing historical offices within Executive Branch agencies and by establishing historical offices in those agencies without historical offices, the Federal Government can best realize the "unprecedented opportunity" offered by the Millennium observance "to energize and unite the Nation with a renewed sense of optimism in the accomplishments and promise of America" and to assure the continuance of that opportunity for the long term.

### Section 2. Executive branch historical offices.

## THE CASE FOR HISTORICAL OFFICES

Federal departments and independent agencies that have maintained historical offices—staffed with trained historians and tasked to engage in professional historical work—have realized significant advantages worth many times the costs of such programs.

Federal historical offices can:

1. Provide institutional memory. As new departmental secretaries, agency heads, and senior staff take up their duties, the historical office can provide them with a broad perspective on the past that is essential to understanding the programs and commitments they are inheriting.
2. Assist records managers and archivists in appraising the historical value of records. Prompt and accurate appraisal can speed the destruction of non-record materials, a vital consideration in light of recent court requirements for agencies to review and rewrite current records schedules pertaining to paper and electronic records, while preserving the critical historical documentation.
3. Provide retrospective policy studies that inform officials so they may avoid the mistakes of the past.
4. Draft historical studies, such as institutional and program histories, to promote public understanding of a department or agency.
5. Assure the preservation of essential records. While most senior officials are rightly concerned with the records of the moment, the historical office can make certain that crucial documentation is collected, organized, and preserved.
6. Quickly retrieve essential records when needed for current operations.
7. Provide expert review of key public documents to assure historical accuracy.
8. Provide historical material for policy statements, congressional testimony, and key speeches and pronouncements by senior officials.
9. Provide quick response to public and congressional inquiries relating to past events and issues, including Freedom of Information Act requests.
10. Prepare special agency documentation and analysis including oral histories, historical sections of Environmental Impact Statements, and cultural resource management studies of federal properties under departmental or agency stewardship.

## FEDERAL HISTORY IN THE MILLENNIUM

- As we approach the Millennium, the documentation of our Federal history is at risk.
- Trained historians are best equipped to respond to this crisis.
- An Executive Order establishing history offices in Federal departments and agencies is a critical first step in guarding and preserving our nation's heritage.
- Such a policy would be cost effective and would ensure that the goal of the Millennium Project to preserve America's treasures will be realized in the new century.