

ADVOCACY ALERT!

Dear NCPH Community,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has announced plans to close two regional archives and research centers: the National Archives at San Francisco (in San Bruno, CA) and the National Archives at Chicago. The first record groups at the Chicago facility [will close to access beginning October 13, 2026](#). These closures endanger public access to significant archival materials that often reflect unique aspects of regional history. The plans also raise alarming questions about the future of the permanent collections housed at each facility. Illinois representative Chuy Garcia is [circulating a letter](#) opposing the closures, and California representative Kevin Mullins has [filed a bill](#) that would require Congressional approval before closing NARA facilities; Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth have filed a [corresponding bill](#) in the Senate.

The NCPH Advocacy Committee encourages members to take action on this issue in these and other ways:

Support locally-led advocacy efforts in both [Chicago](#) and [San Francisco](#).

Contact NARA leadership to share why these facilities are important to you and urge reconsideration of the decision to close them.

- [Bradford P. Wilson](#), Archivist of the United States
- [Jay Trainer](#), Chief Operating Officer
- [Chris Naylor](#), Executive for Research Services
- [Corey Cooke](#), Acting Chief of Staff

Reach out to your US Representative and Senators to ask them to support both the efforts of Reps. Garcia and Mullins and a robust system of regional archives and research centers.

- Find your representative: www.house.gov/representatives
- Find your senators: <https://www.senate.gov/senators>

Schedule Research at NARA San Bruno or NARA Chicago Locations

Members near the threatened regional facilities are encouraged to make a research appointment to visit the facilities in the month of October to celebrate Archives Month and to demonstrate continued support and local interest. For help planning a visit, contact [NARA Chicago](#) or [NARA San Francisco](#). It is not recommended you mention the closures in your research requests.

Sign these [Change.org](#) petitions:

- [Stop the Closure of the National Archives in Chicago and San Francisco!](#)
- [Stop the Closure of the National Archives at Chicago!](#)

Additional Resources:

- The Organization of American Historians (OAH) sent a letter to the then-Acting Archivist of the United States, Edward Forst, asking NARA to reconsider its decision to close the Chicago and San Bruno facilities. This letter speaks to the importance of regional archives, the potential loss of staff expertise, and some of the specific and irreplaceable collections those facilities hold:
<https://www.oah.org/2026/07/20/oah-sends-letter-of-concern-to-acting-aotus-about-announced-regional-nara-closures/>
- The Council of State Archivists (CoSA), the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA), and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) issued a joint statement in opposition to the proposed closures. Their statement calls for additional funding for NARA and emphasizes the importance of providing access to records in regional facilities close to the communities who need them: <https://www2.archivists.org/news/2026/saa-cosa-and-nagara-joint-statement-on-nara-location-closures>
- The Asian American Research Center at Stanford (AARCS) released a statement noting particular concern for access to immigration records, records pertaining to Chinese exclusion, and the original *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* case files, which established the principle of birthright citizenship: <https://aarcs.stanford.edu/aarcs-statement-regarding-proposed-closure-regional-national-archives-facilities-san-bruno-and>
- Numerous related professional organizations, citizens' advocacy groups, and politicians have spoken out against the proposed closures. You can find a growing list of advocacy statements and calls to action here: <https://www.saveournationalarchives.org/updates>

Are you interested in crafting these calls to action and helping decide how NCPH advocates for public history? Join us for a virtual informational meeting on October 27 at 11:30am ET to learn more about the NCPH Advocacy Committee and how to get involved. Email me (rowes@iu.edu) for more information or to sign up.

In solidarity on behalf of NCPH's Advocacy Committee,
Stephanie Rowe
Executive Director