

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
January 23 – 26, 2014
Chicago, Illinois**

**DRAFT Advocacy Agenda Issue Briefs
(Prepared by Frank Boles, Chair, Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy)**

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

A long-standing objective for the Government Affairs Working Group (2008 – 2013) – and now the Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy – has been to develop issue briefs in support of SAA’s [Advocacy Agenda](#). Strategy 1.2.2. in the Strategic Plan 2013-2018¹ calls for the following: “Develop and maintain a wide variety of advocacy resources, including up-to-date issue briefs and talking points on a wide variety of topics that can be adapted easily by archivists, supporters, and the media.”

Individual CAPP members drafted the briefs appended as 0114-VI-C-1 through 0114-VI-C-6. The drafts were reviewed by the Committee as a whole and I made editorial changes based on Committee members’ feedback.

In the process of writing these papers the Committee faced a challenge in defining the word “brief.” We chose at this initial stage to present the Society’s views on topics addressed within the Advocacy Agenda and to provide sufficient background and analysis that members and other audiences may understand the issues and, ideally, speak or write to them based on the information provided. We envision that the information presented in these papers would be re-tooled depending on the intended audience. For example, a one-page summary could be drafted that an archivist might leave with his or her Member of Congress. The statement of SAA’s position would, of course, remain intact, while the background and analysis would be distilled into talking points.

In light of Strategy 1.2.1. – “In collaboration with CoSA, NAGARA, and other influential advocates for archives, develop a broad-based archival advocacy program directed at resource allocators, policymakers, and other ‘influencers’” – the Committee seeks clarification on the process through which position papers will be adopted. Specifically when does the mandated collaboration take place and what purpose does it serve? Is collaboration necessary prior to the adoption of a position paper and, if so, is the collaboration an information-gathering exercise that precedes adoption of a policy by SAA, or does the Council want the Committee to engage in substantive discussion with possible allies to develop a common statement, an activity that might require compromise or other “accommodation” of the potential allies’ position(s)? The

¹ <http://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan/2013-2018>

Committee also notes that although it is not explicitly included in this portion of the Strategic Plan, consultation with outside organizations opens the question of what form of internal consultation within SAA should take place in the creation of advocacy papers.

Based on the Council's responses to the discussion questions posed below, we hope to present final drafts of the issue briefs appended here for Council adoption at its May 2014 meeting. In addition, we will continue to work on papers that address other issues within the Advocacy Agenda.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Does the Council recommend any specific changes in the positions stated in the briefs?
2. Does the Council recommend an alternate format for presenting these briefs for our member audience?
3. To what extent does the Council wish the Committee to seek feedback internally from SAA bodies (e.g., the Issues and Advocacy Roundtable) and/or from SAA members, and to what extent and at what point in the process does the Council wish the Committee to seek feedback from external organizations (including and in addition to CoSA, NAGARA, regional archival associations, and the National Coalition for History)? If the Committee's responsibilities include communicating with external organizations, is the purpose of this activity simply to be cognizant of those organizations' positions or is the Committee also empowered to work with outside organizations to create draft common statements to be presented to the Council?
4. Does the Council concur in the Committee's editorial decision that, once adopted by the Council, a position paper can be presented in a modified way without having to obtain Council approval of the modified "brief"? We note that this editorial authority does not necessarily have to be delegated to the Committee, but could (and, regardless of the authority given to the Committee, likely should) be given to SAA's senior elected officers and/or staff who, because of unanticipated events, may need to create documents for specific audiences (e.g., media or policymakers) in a particularly timely manner.