

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2023

Debra Steidel Wall
Acting Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Dear Acting Archivist of the United States Wall,

On January 20, 2023, thousands of Americans from across the country traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the March for Life, an annual celebration of human life and dignity, and a display of solidarity in the fight to end abortion. Many of the attendees are young Americans, some of whom are visiting their nation's capital for the first time, and use the occasion to enrich their understanding of American history and heritage through Washington, D.C.'s many cultural offerings. Unfortunately some of these offerings appear to be off-limits to pro-life Americans.

Following the March for Life, several pro-life Americans were allegedly harassed and threatened with expulsion from the National Archives Museum for wearing pro-life and human rights affirming apparel. According to a lawsuit filed by the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a group of pro-life Catholic students from Michigan, a group of pro-life students from Liberty University School of Law, and a pro-life grandmother and her grandchild were, on separate occasions, told to remove their pro-life attire as grounds for remaining in the museum. Most disturbingly, one plaintiff even alleges that a security guard told her to remove her pro-life pin while within arm's reach of the Constitution.¹ Further, the fact that similar harassment of pro-life students occurred at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum on the same day suggests that security was acting in accordance with some official guidance.

As you likely already know, there are no laws, rules, or regulations prohibiting members of the public from wearing pro-life attire or apparel inside the National Archives Museum. Indeed, there is a large body of jurisprudence reinforcing citizens' First Amendment rights on public property.² The National Archives is a public institution, dedicated to preserving and sharing our nation's common heritage, open to all Americans, regardless of their political beliefs. Moreover, the National Archives received almost \$500 million in federal funds last year alone. We are deeply concerned about this unjust harassment of young Americans at the home of the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights—subsidized with taxpayer dollars—for wearing apparel with which your staff disagreed. Patriotic Americans who travel thousands of miles to visit their National Archives deserve better.

¹ <https://aclj.org/pro-life/where-next-national-archives-joins-smithsonian-in-kicking-out-pro-life-kids-lawsuit-coming>

² <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution-conan/amendment-1/government-owned-property-early-doctrine>

We request answers to the following questions by March 3, 2023. Please provide a separate response to each question below, rather than a narrative response.

1. What disciplinary action has the National Archives Museum taken regarding this incident?
 - a. If no action has been taken, please delineate the course of action the National Archives Museum plans to take regarding this incident.
2. Does the National Archives Museum have any policy prohibiting pro-life sentiments from being expressed in its buildings or any policy deeming it a “neutral zone?”
 - a. If there is no express policy prohibiting pro-life sentiments, was there a special policy put in place expressly for the day of the March for Life – January 20, 2023? If so, why?
3. Were you aware of the similar harassment of pro-life students at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum?
 - a. If yes, what policies did you review and what training(s) did you provide to your staff in light of the Smithsonian incident to ensure it would not occur at the National Archives?
4. Were the employees that asked the pro-life visitors to cover up their clothing acting pursuant to instructions or policy of the National Archives?
 - a. Was there any change to National Archives’ clothing policy in the month prior to the 2023 March for Life?
5. What efforts have you taken to ensure that the First Amendment rights of all Americans are respected at the National Archives Museum and an incident like this never occurs again under your leadership?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
U.S. Senator



Chip Roy
Member of Congress



Mike Lee
U.S. Senator



Josh Brecheen
Member of Congress



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Lindsey O. Graham
U.S. Senator



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



Cindy Hyde-Smith
U.S. Senator



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress



Mike Braun
U.S. Senator



Mary Miller
Member of Congress



Ben Cline
Member of Congress



Marjorie Taylor Greene
Member of Congress



Ronny Jackson
Member of Congress



John Moolenaar
Member of Congress



Andy Ogles
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford
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Erin Houchin
Member of Congress



Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress