

Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery
Full Committee Hearing: Nomination of Colleen J. Shogan to be Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration
February 28, 2023

Today we are considering the nomination of Dr. Colleen Shogan to be Archivist of the National Archives and Records Administration.

The Committee is holding a second hearing on this nomination at the request of our minority colleagues, and I hope they will use this additional opportunity to ask substantive questions and evaluate Dr. Shogan's qualifications carefully and fairly.

Dr. Shogan, welcome back, congratulations on your nomination, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

You are exceedingly well-qualified to serve as the next Archivist of the United States, and I hope to see you confirmed quickly to this important role.

Throughout your career, you have served in several nonpartisan leadership positions with dedication and integrity. And during last year's nomination hearing, you demonstrated keen judgement, a deep understanding of the importance of the Archivist role, and a firm commitment to nonpartisanship and transparency.

Last Congress, some of my colleagues raised concerns about potential partisan bias. However, your extensive track record shows these claims to be unfounded.

This Committee has heard from many individuals and organizations who attest to Dr. Shogan's expertise and ability to work in a nonpartisan manner. These include the American Political Science Association, the Council of State Archivists, the American Historical Association, and other national, nonpartisan and nonpolitical organizations who have enthusiastically endorsed Dr. Shogan's nomination.

I will enter all of the letters of support into the hearing record.

The National Archives and Records Administration is the federal agency charged with maintaining and preserving presidential and federal records.

Recent events have highlighted longstanding issues with presidential records management and classification. I understand that many of my colleagues are eager for more information on these issues.

But I want to stress that, as you told us in your previous hearing, you are not able to provide details about current investigations related to presidential records because you do not currently work at NARA.

For my Committee colleagues, this is an area that this Committee has been actively engaged in, and will continue to examine this Congress.

Last Congress, I convened a hearing to examine records management challenges and potential reforms. Following that hearing, I drafted legislation that will strengthen existing laws and modernize recordkeeping processes.

I look forward to working with Ranking Member Paul and the other Members of the Committee to build on the work from last Congress to advance bipartisan legislation that will strengthen our records preservation laws.

Today, I hope to have a constructive dialog about the current challenges facing the National Archives and Dr. Shogan's plans for addressing them.

The National Archives faces large backlogs of public records requests and requests for military personnel records that are essential to ensuring veterans and servicemembers receive the benefits they have earned.

The Archivist will also be responsible for leading the transition to electronic records across the federal government. Confirming Dr. Shogan as the next Archivist will help the National Archives address these challenges.

Assuring the full and accurate preservation of our nation's history is a monumental task, and requires an independent, nonpartisan leader dedicated to serving the American public. I am confident that Dr. Shogan is the right choice to serve as the next National Archivist.

Today I look forward to hearing more from you, Dr. Shogan and about your experience and qualifications and how you plan to serve. Thank you.