



Ford W. Bell, DVM
President

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September 25, 2012

The Honorable Nathan Deal
The State Capitol
206 Washington Street, Suite 203
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

I'm writing to express my deep concern that the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget has instructed the Office of the Secretary of State to reduce its FY13 and FY14 budgets by \$732,626, which will result in the closure of the Georgia State Archives in Morrow, GA on November 1, 2012.

As you may know, the American Alliance of Museums represents the full range of our nation's museums – from art to zoo and everything in between, including many archives and historical societies. We are proud to work on behalf of the 17,500 museums of all types that employ 400,000 people and contribute \$21 billion to local economies. Museums and archives are united in preserving and interpreting America's history and heritage to the broadest possible public.

I recognize the financial challenges the State of Georgia is currently facing, and I appreciate your efforts to address the budget shortfall. However, it greatly concerns me that the State plans to close to the public this important repository of public documents and historical information.

Such a move would leave Georgia in a very unfortunate situation of being the only state in the country without a central location for the public to visit, research, and review the state's historical records. Additionally, this decision will leave several valuable state employees jobless. While the intention is to keep the Archives available to the public on a limited, by-appointment-only basis, the reduction in staff will severely limit that option.

Archives play a critical educational role and closing this important resource will have far-reaching effects for researchers and students across the state. It will also hinder those across the nation who wish to learn more about Georgia's rich history. Finally, the state Archives plays an important role in maintaining the public trust through transparency and public accountability. I urge you to reconsider this reduction and keep the Georgia State Archives open on a regular basis.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information about the vital role of museums in Georgia. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ford W. Bell", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive in style.

Ford W. Bell, DVM