



FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES  
& ARCHIVES OF TEXAS

August 30, 2018

The Honorable Brian Birdwell, Chairman  
Sunset Advisory Commission  
PO Box 13066  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Chairman Birdwell:

I write to you on behalf of the Friends of Libraries & Archives of Texas to enthusiastically support the reauthorization of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. We express our thanks to the staff of the Sunset Advisory Commission for their thoughtful review. We agree with the assessment that Texas has continuing need for TSLAC, and we agree that its current organization supports the broad array of informational needs across the state.

I would like to focus on three primary points. First, I wish to highlight the Agency's expert care of the archival resources of Texas. The Staff Report noted concern over the archival backlog. While the Agency must still process a significant amount of archival records, the presence of a backlog is common in almost all archival repositories. The Texas State Library and Archives Commission has preserved and managed the archival history of Texas for well over 100 years, and in that time, it has safeguarded the vast informational treasury of the state, promoted public awareness of Texas history, and ensured ongoing access to these archival records through the professional, labor-intensive work for of appraisal, organization, description, education, and outreach. The Agency has overseen the care and access of millions upon millions of records of Texas. Despite having only a small archival staff, TSLAC has earned the reputation as a national leader for its work in the critical areas of electronic archival records and, of course, its continuing work making the archives available to the people of Texas.

Secondly, I would affirm to you the critical role of the Agency in collecting and preserving all of the records of state government and state elected officials. The record of Texas comprises a complex but interconnected body of records that together form a full and essential document of Texas history. By preserving and making state records accessible together, the people of Texas benefit by the context established by all records combined as well as the information contained within a specific group of state documents. We urge the Sunset Commission to consider the important role of maintaining a state policy that directs all state records to be preserved at the State Archives.

Finally, I would like to submit for your consideration an issue that was not addressed in the Sunset Staff Report. The Agency currently lacks the authority to advertise the incredibly important Talking Book Program (a reading service for those who cannot read standard print) and the TexShare and TexQuest programs (which provide learning resources to students, teachers, and the public throughout the state).

Further, the Agency is unable to sell replicas of materials, such as copies of historical maps and photographs, or to produce materials such as calendars and other items that showcase the history and primary documents of the state. The ability to advertise and sell historically-themed items would provide the Agency with a way to promote awareness of critical resources and to generate some revenue that could be used to advance preservation and education of Texas history. I respectfully request consideration of this potential role for the agency, as I believe it would offer a great benefit to the state.

Again, I thank you, all the Sunset Commission members, and Sunset staff for your very fine work conducted on behalf of the state. Please let me know if I may be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea Lapsley". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrea" and last name "Lapsley" clearly legible.

Andrea Lapsley  
President