

United States Senate
Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
Hearing on the Nomination of Bradford P. Wilson
To be Archivist of the United States
June 17, 2026
Washington, D.C.

Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, and Members of the Committee,

I am grateful to you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored by the faith President Trump has placed in me by nominating me to serve as the 12th Archivist of the United States, and I deeply appreciate this committee's consideration.

If I am fortunate to be confirmed as the nation's Archivist, I will bring nearly four decades of administrative experience and leadership to the position. I will also bring 45 years of scholarship and teaching on the founding documents and political history of this country, at a time when we are turning once again to commemorate America's origins as a nation and our guiding philosophical and constitutional principles that have endured these 250 years. In 1950, the Archivist of the United States, Wayne Grover, wrote that "academic qualifications in history and the social sciences are essential for an archivist, if he is to develop subject-matter competence in the areas of documentation for which he is responsible." Especially given this moment in our national history, my background as a scholar, teacher, and leader are those that the next Archivist should be expected to possess.

As an administrator, I have led a variety of institutions and programs, each having its own mission, professional staff, and set of complex challenges that demanded managerial competence and executive leadership to serve and advance its unique mission. Every leader becomes better by continually taking stock of lessons learned. I have learned the importance of listening early, communicating clearly, making decisions transparently, and recognizing that even in successful institutions, there is always room for improvement. These are lessons that would guide my role at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

As with the institutions and programs I have been fortunate to lead, I would, if confirmed, be laser-focused on serving the governing mission of NARA. Put simply, NARA's mission is to serve the American people as our nation's record keepers. The great historian, David

McCullough, referred to the collected records of the National Archives as “one of the wonders of our country, the richest, most enthralling documentation we have as a nation of who we are, what we have achieved, our adventures, and what we stand for.” As such, it is imperative that those records be made available to the American people, to whom they belong. Acquisition, preservation, and organization so as to provide access to the American public, researchers, and our government are the heart of NARA’s activities.

Importantly, I am grateful for the highly trained and professional staff at NARA. If confirmed, I will rely on their expertise to continue efforts to modernize records management practices and preservation activities, and to provide the American public with access to their history.

The 250th anniversary of the United States’ declared independence is an opportune time to double NARA’s efforts at informing the public of the importance and accessibility of its holdings for civic education. The impressive interest of the American people in the country’s history and the affection that Americans have for the National Archives are wonderful resources for a robust program of public education into the availability of the vast historical records of the federal government. If confirmed, I would make such a program a priority of NARA.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I would be humbled to lead the knowledgeable and talented team of public servants at NARA. Preservation, transparency, and accessibility would remain the core of the work of NARA. I look forward to answering your questions.