



Testimony presented by
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EISENHOWER
FOUNDATION

President Dwight Eisenhower is the fifth best president in history. How do I know? Because *C-SPAN* said so. *C-SPAN*'s 2017 Presidential Historians Survey polled 91 historians and scholars. Historians evaluated the presidents on 10 qualities of presidential leadership including economic management, international relations, crisis leadership, public persuasion skills and whether they pursued equal justice for all. This ranking isn't coincidence. It's the result of the important work conducted at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene. Critical elements of this work include:

De-classifying documents.

The Eisenhower Library contains 26 million pages of historical records and papers representing Ike's military and presidential career. Most of these holdings are unique to the Eisenhower Library and can't be found anywhere else in the world. Some of this information is still classified and held in a vault which requires top-level national security clearance. When portions of these documents become declassified, researchers and scholars from around the world travel to Abilene to review it. The newly-declassified documents provide a fresh look into President Eisenhower's leadership, political decisions and military decisions. About 850 researchers and scholars travel annually to the Eisenhower Library for this purpose.

Artifact conservation.

The Eisenhower Museum collection includes 70,000 artifacts, many of which are one-of-a-kind. Among them is the D-Day Planning Table, where the greatest military minds of the 20th Century, led by General Eisenhower, gathered together to plan the largest military invasion in modern history that led to the liberation of Europe.

Telling the Eisenhower Story.

The Eisenhower Museum opened in 1954 in honor of General Eisenhower and all World War II Veterans. Since opening, the exhibits expanded to include not only his military years, but also his Abilene years and presidential years. More than 200,000 visitors come to the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum annually to tour his Boyhood Home, the Museum or the Place of Meditation. In addition, K-12 education curriculum and public programs are offered. These three elements – de-classifying documents, artifact conservation and telling the Eisenhower story – all work in tandem to preserve and promote Eisenhower's legacy and has resulted in his steady rise in the presidential rankings.

Local and State Impact.

In particular, the Eisenhower Museum's role in telling Ike's story through exhibits, public programs and K-12 education curriculum is most important to all Kansans.

During a time when many rural Kansas communities struggle with identifying a niche that will attract people and commerce, Abilene, with a population of 6,800 people, has leveraged the Eisenhower story for the benefit of not only the community, but also the state. Few historical Kansas attractions can say they bring in 200,000 visitors a year. Our institution and community recently received several accolades including: "Best Kansas Attraction" by *USA Today* and *Smithsonian Magazine's* "Best Small Town to Visit".

The Eisenhower Foundation currently ranks 13th lowest out of 14 presidential libraries in both our annual operating budget and our reserve/endowed funds...only the Obama Foundation, which isn't formally established yet, ranks lower (see graphs). Imagine what our impact will be with much needed investment.

The Eisenhower Presidential Campus is a national treasure of which Kansans – and all Americans who continue to hold General and President Dwight D. Eisenhower in high esteem – can be proud. However, maintaining our niche comes at a price.

The Eisenhower Foundation is in the middle of its largest fundraising campaign in our 72-year history. This will result in a comprehensive exhibit renovation of the Eisenhower Presidential Museum and the first comprehensive exhibit renovation in more than 45 years.

The new exhibit storyline will reflect new scholarship that has been discovered during the last 20 years. It will stand as a testament to Kansas' favorite son, Ike, the men and women who served with him during World War II, and an entire generation that paved the road to the world we live in today.

In order to ensure the Eisenhower Presidential Museum is reopened by the 75th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 2019 – possibly one of the last opportunities we have to publicly say thank-you and pay tribute to our World War II Veterans – we must raise the final \$2 million of the \$11.75 million project in 2018.

HB 2776 is an opportunity for the State of Kansas and Kansas taxpayers to support this national treasure located in our home state. A 70% tax credit will help raise \$500,000 in private donations for what has been a challenging capital campaign due to the rural location of the Eisenhower Museum.

Thank you for your consideration. I welcome your questions.

Presidential Library Foundations Survey Presidential Library Foundations Survey

What is the balance of the Foundation's endowment/reserve funds?

Respondents	Responses
George H.W. Bush Presidential Library Foundation	65000000
Barack Obama Foundation	N/A
Roosevelt Institute	13,000,000
John F. Kennedy Library Foundation	47,000,000
Harry S. Truman Library Institute	12,056,333
Clinton Foundation	159,000,000
Carter Center	31,000,000
Eisenhower Foundation	\$156,000
Gerald R. Ford Foundation	31,000,000
LBJ Foundation	174,500,000
George W. Bush Foundation	\$78,900,000
Richard Nixon Foundation	40,000,000
The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute	300,000,000

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Responses

