



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NYS Assemblyman Bill Conrad announces \$50,000 grant for Buffalo History Museum**

*Funds to support students' participation in History Day contests*

**BUFFALO** – New York State Assemblyman Bill Conrad today, March 9, 2024, announced \$50,000 in state funding he has secured for the Buffalo History Museum.

The grant will offset expenses associated with the museum's sponsorship of local and regional competitions affiliated with National History Day.

The museum hosts students for the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) History Day and Western New York History Day contests. Conrad's grant will be used to cover the program's costs, ranging from outreach and resources to day-of logistics like transportation, refreshments, and student awards.

BPS History Day and WNY History Day are each a year-long educational program that encourages students to explore local, state, national, and world history. Students select a topic that relates to an annual theme and conduct extensive research using libraries, archives, museums, and oral interviews.

Students analyze and interpret their findings, draw conclusions about their topics' historical significance, and create final projects that present their work. These projects can be entered into a series of competitions, up to the national level, where they are evaluated by historians and educators.

The BPS History Day Contest was held Feb. 16. The regional, WNY History Day Contest, is today, March 9. There are five project categories: historical paper, exhibit, performance, website, and documentary. Students compete in the junior division for grades 6-8 or the senior division for grades 9-12. This year's theme is "Turning Points in History," and at least 75 students from three counties are participating. It's the first time the Buffalo History Museum is hosting the regional contest, which was previously held at Canisius University.

Today's winners will compete in the New York State History Day Contest on April 14 at SUNY Oneonta. State finalists will go on to the National History Day Contest, to be held June 9-13 at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Conrad, a former high school social studies teacher and a member of the Assembly Committee on Education, has been a vocal advocate for the enhancement of history and civics education. He is the sponsor of a pending bill, A.4080, to authorize state grants for the implementation of schools' Seal of Civic Readiness Program, which awards a graduation distinction to seniors who've completed advanced civics coursework and special projects.

The History Day contests at the Buffalo History Museum are held in partnership with the Niagara Frontier Council of Social Studies (NFCSS).

Any remaining funds not used in support of the history contests will be used to develop educational resources to commemorate the Erie Canal Bicentennial in 2025.

**Assemblyman Bill Conrad** said, "As a former teacher for 20-plus years, I know how an understanding of history can solidify a student's grasp of the challenges facing today's world. It also fosters an interest in civitas, and a willingness to engage with one's community. I was so pleased to secure this funding, to help the Buffalo History Museum achieve its goal of hosting successful BPS and WNY History Day contests – and in turn, building the next generation of scholars, servants, and leaders."

**Buffalo History Museum Executive Director Melissa Brown** said, "From his experience in education, Assemblyman Conrad understands that explorations in history help students develop critical thinking skills that apply in all aspects of life. The History Day program serves as a great reminder of the nuance of history and of just how much there is to dig into. Through longstanding partnerships with the BPS and NFCSS, it's incredible to support and experience the work of history crafted by these students each year. Advocacy and investment like Assemblyman Conrad's are vital to ensuring this dynamic learning experience."

**Niagara Frontier Council of Social Studies President Richard Pysczek** said, "There is a saying amongst participants that the National History Day program (NHD) is just not a day, but rather an experience! These shared experiences over the last 50 years have had a profound impact on students, families, educators, and historians who have participated in this program. The NHD 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary theme is 'Turning Points in History,' and we look at this commitment by Assemblymember Conrad and the Buffalo History Museum as a Turning Point in the National History Day Program for Buffalo and Western New York."

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### **About the Buffalo History Museum**

The Buffalo History Museum has been Western New York's premier historical organization since 1862 and is the keeper of the authentic stories that make this community unique. Its collections, exhibits, and programs share the stories of the people, events, and movements that demonstrate Western New York's essential place in shaping American history.

The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (doing business as the Buffalo History Museum) is a private, nonprofit organization tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It

receives operating support from the County of Erie, the City of Buffalo, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Gov. Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and from donors, members, and friends. The Buffalo History Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Its website is [www.buffalohistory.org](http://www.buffalohistory.org).

### **About the Niagara Frontier Council for the Social Studies**

The mission of the Niagara Frontier Council for the Social Studies is to provide leadership, service, and support for all social studies educators in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Orleans, Niagara, and Wyoming counties.

Social studies educators teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy.

### **About National History Day**

National History Day is a College Park, Maryland-based nonprofit that runs an annual project-based contest for students in grades 6-12.

Now in its 50<sup>th</sup> year, the organization has affiliates in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

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