



**Robert C. Byrd Center**  
*for CONGRESSIONAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION*

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**Community Invited to Join Friends of the Byrd Center**

The Friends of the Byrd Center, a local group of citizens, announced this week that it has raised \$100,000 toward its \$200,000 goal to support the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education, located at Shepherd University. This Friends campaign was boosted to its halfway mark by the end of 2020 with a gift of \$60,000 by an anonymous donor to match every dollar raised. This generous matching offer to double the value of each donation will continue into 2021 as the campaign ramps up to reach its goal of \$200,000.

Lisa Welch, a member of the Byrd Center's board of directors, who encouraged the Friends of the Byrd Center to lead this fundraising effort, said, "It's incredibly gratifying to see the Shepherdstown community's generous ongoing support of this valuable community asset." The chair of the steering committee Marianne Alexander, another board member, said, "The success of our fundraising campaign in a few short months clearly shows that the Byrd Center is a vital part of the fabric of our community and the university."

For many area residents, the Byrd Center is Shepherdstown's center for civic engagement where free public programs feature lectures, book talks and film screenings on current policy issues that relate to the history of Congress and the U.S. Constitution. The Byrd Center Auditorium is also a meeting place for a multitude of community groups. Many area residents attend Shepherd University's Lifelong Learning classes in the Byrd Center's auditorium and classrooms.

Shepherd students serve as interns at the Byrd Center's political archives to gain the knowledge and skills that lead directly to careers in public history and archival work. The Center's staff uses the archives for teaching materials that enliven and enrich civic education for WV high school students as well as for their teachers through the Center's grant-supported teacher institutes.

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional Education and History is a nonprofit organization on the campus of Shepherd University. Originally sustained by Congressional appropriations, the Center's future depends on private donations and competitive grants to continue its programs. Current funding will expire by the end of 2022. Learning of this impending budget shortfall last summer, the Friends of the Byrd Center began planning a fundraising campaign to raise \$200,000. This sum will give the Center an additional year to establish a more diverse funding base that will provide continuing financial support for its staff and maintain its current program offerings.

Now, we need members of the community to close the gap. Donations to the Byrd Center can be made online at [www.byrdcenter.org](http://www.byrdcenter.org), or by check payable to "The Byrd Center" and mailed to: The Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education, PO Box 5000, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. Contributions are tax deductible.

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