

Brief History of the Byrd Center

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education was established in 2002 to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the United States Congress. Located within a 2-hour drive from Washington D.C., the Byrd Center is situated on the campus of Shepherd University.

In the mid-1990s, colleagues and friends of Senator Robert C. Byrd established the Congressional Education Foundation, Incorporated, with the goal of developing an institution that would study the history of the United States Congress, using Senator Byrd's extensive papers as well as the archived collections of other West Virginian congressional representatives as a foundation for research and public, educational programming. Under the planning of the foundation, a connection with Shepherd University was forged to locate the Byrd Center on its campus in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle, a region accessible to both the state and the nation's capital city. Construction of the center, which was built as part of an expansion and modernization of the campus' Ruth Scarborough Library, was completed in 2002 and dedicated by Senator Byrd.

The archive of the Byrd Center currently houses several congressional collections which document the history of West Virginia's representation in the United States Congress from 1949 to 2011, covering significant state, national, and international topics. The papers of Senator Robert C. Byrd, Congressmen Harley O. Staggers, Sr., Harley O. Staggers, Jr., Robert H. Mollohan, and Alan B. Mollohan, and Scot Faulkner, first Chief Administrative Officer of the United States House of Representatives, are among the historical records preserved at the center and available to the public for research.

We carry out our mission through a variety of programs and publications designed to meet the overall objectives of improving public understanding of Congress and the legislative process. The center conducts lectures, film screenings, public forums, teacher's institutes, workshops, and conferences on a wide variety of topics and issues. Our facility also plays an important role on the campus of Shepherd University by offering the use of our meeting spaces to a wide range of campus and community programs and organizations.

The Byrd Center was the site for the organization of the [Association of Centers for the Study of Congress](#) in 2003, a national consortium of congressional repositories, and our staff continue to play active roles in the association's leadership.