

**SOCIETY OF
ARCHITECTURAL
HISTORIANS**

8 November 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Proposed U.S. Withdrawal from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) strongly rejects the announced intention of the United States to withdraw (12 October 2017) from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), effective 31 December 2018.

The SAH has long supported the heritage conservation mission of UNESCO, especially its World Heritage Sites program, which has long sought to identify and conserve significant historic and prehistoric buildings, places, sites, and landscapes of exceptional importance to humankind, including a number of sites in the United States. We join with many other cultural organizations, including the American Institute of Architects, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and others in both rejecting this withdrawal and requesting reconsideration of this decision. We also join with these organizations in the hope and expectation that the United States will continue to work with our international partners to protect and conserve these buildings, places, sites, and landscapes.

Since its founding on 16 November 1945, when, in the wake of the Second World War, representatives of 37 countries met in London to sign UNESCO's Constitution, UNESCO has been the world's primary institution in safeguarding global education and culture. For many years, the U.S. Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and the U.S. Mission have worked to promote human rights, tolerance and learning throughout the world. Their work in areas such as freedom of expression, education for girls and women, science for development, and heritage conservation reflect the best of American values, and reflect well upon us as Americans, both at home and abroad. We note that this is not the first time that the U.S. has left UNESCO. In 1983, the U.S. withdrew from UNESCO, rejoining in 2003. We also note that the U.S. has not paid its dues to UNESCO, amounting to approximately \$500 million.

The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) expresses its strong objection to the proposed withdrawal of the U.S. from UNESCO, and urges a reconsideration of this position. Therefore, we strongly urge you, Mr. Secretary, to look for ways to continue the U.S. membership and participation in UNESCO.

Sincerely,



Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C
Chair, Society of Architectural Historians Heritage Conservation Committee

cc: Mr. Donald J. Trump, President of the United States; The Honorable Nikki Haley, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; Ms. Pauline Saliga; Ms. Deborah Slaton; Mr. Kenneth Breisch, Ph.D.; Mr. David Fixler, FAIA; Mr. Jeffrey Cody, Ph.D.; Mr. Ken Oshima, Ph.D.; Mr. Anthony Cohn, Members, SAH Heritage Conservation Committee