

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 29, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services and
Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services and
Education
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby,

We are writing to thank you for your support for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Office of Museum Services (OMS) and to urge the Subcommittee to support \$50 million for OMS in the FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

Museums are economic engines – spending more than \$20 billion in their communities, employing 400,000 Americans, and spurring local tourism. Museums are also fostering the kind of critical thinking skills and innovation that are necessary to keep our nation competitive in the global economy.

The demand for museum services is greater than ever. At a time when school resources are strained and many families cannot afford to travel or make ends meet, museums are working overtime to fill the gaps – providing more than 18 million instructional hours to schoolchildren, bringing art and cultural heritage, dynamic exhibitions and living specimens into local communities, encouraging national service and volunteerism, collecting food and other resources for needy families and individuals, and offering free or reduced admission to military families. Unfortunately, museums are struggling significantly in these difficult economic times. They are being forced to cut back on hours, educational programming, community services, and jobs. And according to the 2005 Heritage Health Index, at least 190 million artifacts are at risk, suffering from light damage and harmful and insecure storage conditions.

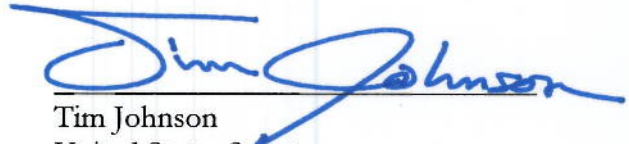
The Institute of Museum and Library Services – the primary federal agency that supports our nation's 17,500 museums – was unanimously reauthorized in 2010 by both the House and Senate. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants serve every state. Although the agency has been successful in creating and supporting advancements in areas such as technology, lifelong community learning and conservation and preservation efforts, only a small fraction of the nation's museums are currently being reached, and many highly rated grant applications go unfunded each year. The re-authorization contained several provisions to further support museums, particularly at the state level, but much of the recently authorized activities cannot be accomplished without meaningful funding.

We therefore recommend a critical investment in our nation's museums. Specifically, we are requesting \$50 million for IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY13. Again, we appreciate the Subcommittee's prior support for OMS and request this investment to strengthen and sustain the work of our nation's museums.

Sincerely,



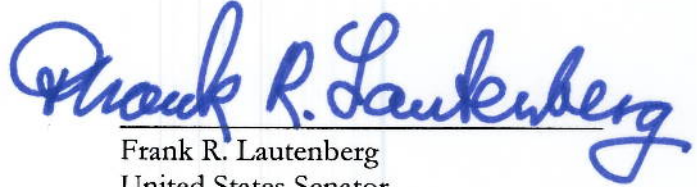
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



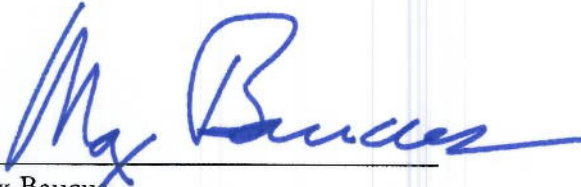
Tim Johnson
United States Senator



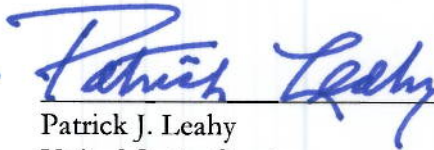
Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senator



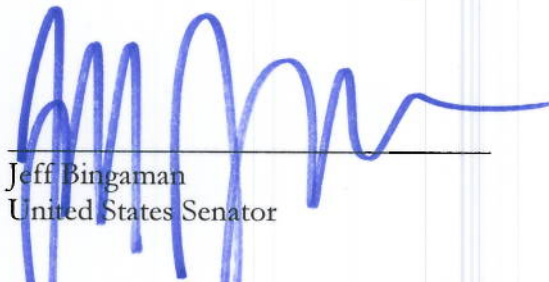
Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator



Max Baucus
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



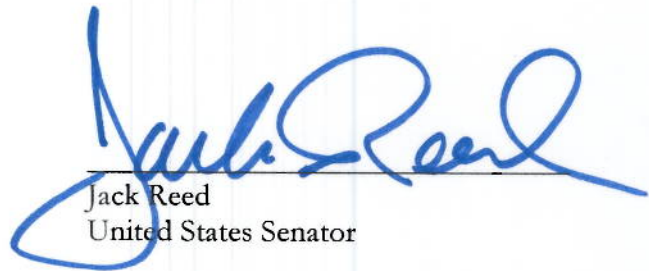
Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



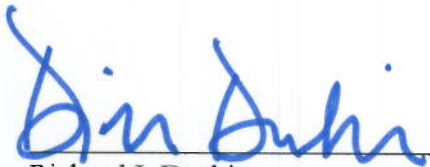
Jack Reed
United States Senator



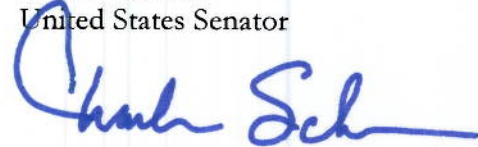
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



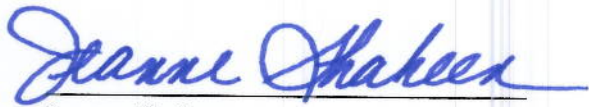
Bernie Sanders
United States Senator



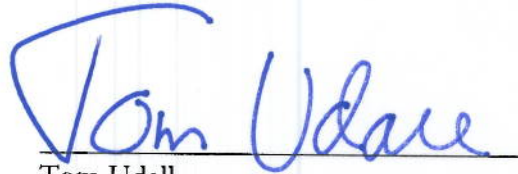
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator