

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2015

Chairman Roy Blunt
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Patty Murray
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

We write to thank the Subcommittee for its previous support, and to urge you to support robust funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Office of Museum Services (OMS) in the FY 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. The Office of Museum Services is currently authorized to receive \$38.6 million annually.

Despite its small size, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is the largest dedicated source of investment in our nation's museums, which employ over 400,000 Americans and directly contribute \$21 billion to the U.S. economy each year. OMS funding multiplies this economic impact by helping museums reach more visitors and spur community development. In addition to their economic benefits, OMS grants also support museums' advancements in areas such as technology, lifelong community learning, and conservation and preservation. These successes notwithstanding, only a small fraction of the nation's museums are currently being reached and many highly rated grant applications go unfunded.

The demand for museum services is greater than ever. At a time when school and community resources are strained, museums are working overtime to fill the gaps. Every year, they welcome more than 55 million schoolchildren, bring art, science and cultural heritage into communities, and partner with other nonprofits to meet the specific needs of their local population. In addition, our nation's museums are opening their doors to more people than ever with over 850 million visits each year – with many of these visitors offered free or reduced admission. Museums are also part of a robust nonprofit community working to address a wide range of our nation's greatest challenges, from conducting medical research to helping veterans heal physically and psychologically, and from creating energy efficient public buildings to collecting food for needy families.

In 2010, the Institute of Museum and Library Services was unanimously reauthorized by both the House and Senate. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants leverage significant private resources while supporting museums in every state. The reauthorization contained several provisions to further support museums, particularly at the state level, but many of the recently authorized activities cannot be accomplished without sustained funding.

We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2016 to support the important work museums are doing in our communities. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to continue bolstering the economy, serving our schools and communities, and preserving our cultural heritage for future generations.

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 Gillibrand
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



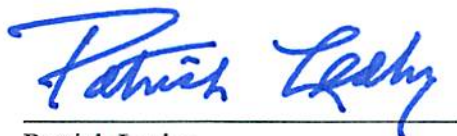
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



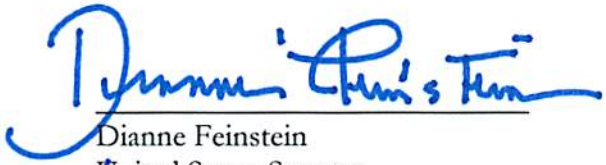
Chris Coons
United States Senator



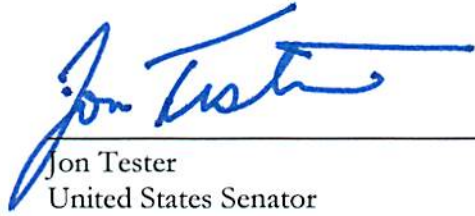
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



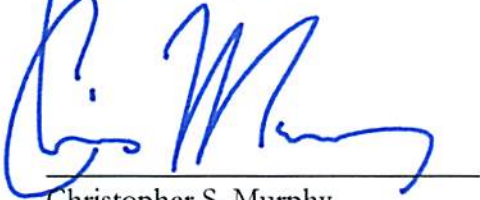
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United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
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United States Senator



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Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



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Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Gary Peters
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Elizabeth Warren
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Richard J. Durbin
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Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



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Robert Menendez
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Jack Reed
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator