Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

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 districts. 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,

Paul Tonko
Louise M. Slaughter
Robert A. Brady
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Ann Kirkpatrick
Frederica S. Wilson
Leonard Lance
David B. McKinley, P.E.
Debbie Dingell
Ann McLane Kuster
Kathy Castor
Jackie Speier
Michelle Lujan Grisham

David Scott

Mike Doyle

Alan Grayson

Mark Pocan

John Lewis

John Yarmuth

Joyce Beatty

Alma Adams, Ph.D.

Dennis Ross

Cedric Richmond

Joseph P. Kennedy

William R. Keating

Dina Titus

Marc Veasey

Mark Takai
Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Renee Ellmers
Pedro R. Pierluisi
Xavier Becerra
Sander Levin
Chellie Pingree
Seth Moulton
Michael E. Capuano
Jerry McNerney
Loretta Sanchez
Bill Foster
Jim Himes
Brenda Lawrence
Zoe Lofgren
Ed Perlmutter
Matt Cartwright
Jared Polis

Susan Brooks

Tony Cárdenas

Raúl M. Grijalva

Dave Loebsack

Kyrsten Sinema

Tulsi Gabbard

Chris Van Hollen

Ron Kind

Mark Takano

Kathleen M. Rice

Judy Chu

Sean Patrick Maloney

Niki Tsongas

John Delaney

Katherine Clark
Ben Ray Luján
André Carson
Brian Higgins
Lloyd Doggett

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Linda T. Sánchez
Jim Langevin
Beto O'Rourke