

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2016

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 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. The Office of Museum Services was approved to receive \$38.6 million annually in its most recent reauthorization.

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 these activities cannot be accomplished without sustained funding.

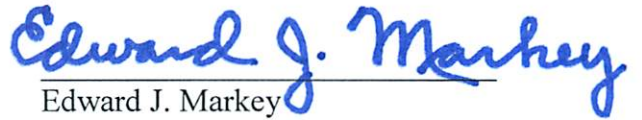
We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2017 to support the important work museums are doing in our districts. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to continue bolstering the economy, serving our schools and communities, 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,



Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senator



Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator



Joseph Manchin III
U.S. Senator



Al Franken
U.S. Senator



Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senator



Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator



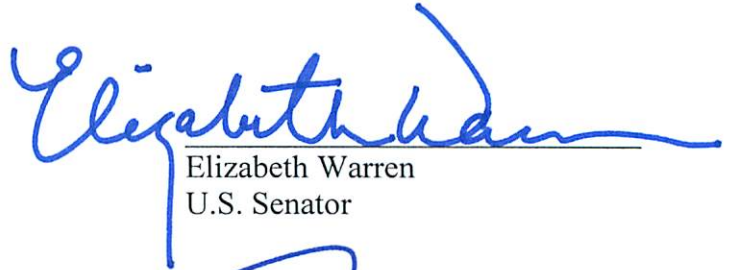
Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator



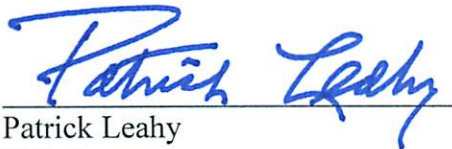
Jack Reed
U.S. Senator



Cory A. Booker
U.S. Senator



Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senator



Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senator



Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator



Gary C. Peters
U.S. Senator



Brian Schatz
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator



Bernard Sanders
U.S. Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator



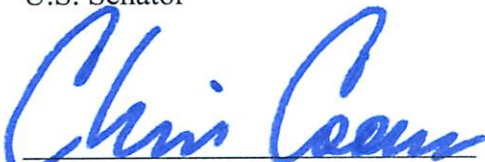
Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senator



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator



Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senator



Christopher A. Coons
U.S. Senator



Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senator



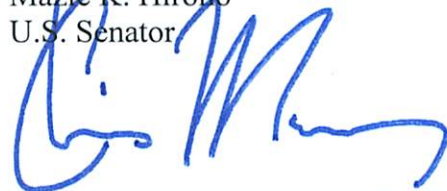
Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator



Jon Tester
U.S. Senator



Christopher Murphy
U.S. Senator



Martin Heinrich
U.S. Senator



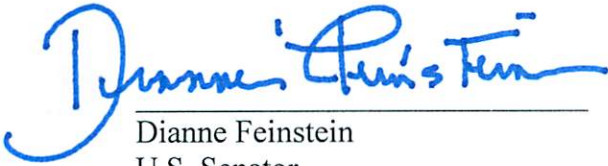
Angus S. King, Jr.
U.S. Senator



Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator



Joe Donnelly
U.S. Senator



Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senator

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