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Senate of Pennsylvania

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May 22, 2020

The Honorable Pat Browne
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
281 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: American Helicopter Museum & Education Center

Dear Senator Browne:

I am writing on behalf of the American Helicopter Museum & Education Center in West Chester, part of the 9th Senatorial District.

As we know, historical organizations are facing significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pennsylvania Tourism Office forecasts that the economic impact to the U.S. travel and tourism industry from COVID-19 will be 7 times that of 9/11. The American Alliance of Museums estimates that as many as 30% of museums in the U.S., mostly in small and rural communities, will not reopen without significant and immediate emergency financial assistance. PA Museums, the state museum association, has estimated that museums in Pennsylvania are losing \$1.2 million daily during this crisis.

I was recently contacted by staff at the American Helicopter Museum & Education Center who indicated admissions are 46% lower than last year; both membership and retail revenues are down over 33%; and program fees are down 64%. The Museum has had to furlough staff, defer maintenance, and cancel initiatives that would have allowed them to better serve the community. These are not figures that will bounce back as soon as the Museum can reopen; its leadership forecasts a long-term reduction in services and related revenue and needs our support to make it through this challenging time.

I ask that we continue to support all Pennsylvania's museums and historical organizations, like the Helicopter Museum; in the fiscal year 2020-2021 state budget by protecting the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's line item for Cultural and Historical Support grants; increasing that allocation if possible; and exploring other ways the Commonwealth may provide grants and assistance to our institutions. That funding is absolutely essential to the recovery of the museum sector across the southeast and the entire Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Tom Killion in black ink.

TOM KILLION
SENATOR, 9th DISTRICT
TK/kjh

cc: The Honorable Jake Corman
The Honorable Joe Scarnati