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FY 2022 House of Representatives OMS Sign-on Letter

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole,

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 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

Museums across the country are struggling with the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Survey data](#) shows that one out of every three museums may shutter permanently without immediate support—a loss of 12,000 museums and 124,000 jobs—and confirms the financial state of U.S. museums is moving from bad to worse. 30 percent of museums remain closed since the March 2020 lockdown and those that have reopened are operating on an average of 35 percent of their regular attendance, a reduction that is unsustainable long-term even with recent federal relief support. Like other nonprofits, museums are suffering yet continue to work to meet the needs of their communities. From accommodating spaces for remote and virtual classrooms to providing lesson plans, online learning opportunities, and drop-off learning kits to teachers and families, museums are stable oases in the midst of turmoil.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through its CARES Act grants for museums and the *REopening Archives, Libraries and Museums* (REALM) project. The REALM project is a research partnership between OCLC, IMLS-OMS, and Battelle to create and distribute science-based information and recommended practices designed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to staff and visitors who are engaging in the delivery or use of museum services.

Despite its small size, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is the largest dedicated source of investment in our nation's museums, which pre-COVID-19 supported over 700,000 jobs and contributed \$50 billion annually to the U.S. economy. OMS funding plays a significant role in 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 public health upgrades, 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.

Museums will be vital to the nation's recovery and the recovery of communities, big and small, urban and rural, all across the country. At a time when school and community resources are strained, museums are working overtime to fill the gaps. Pre-COVID-19, they welcomed annually more than 55 million schoolchildren, bringing art, science, and cultural heritage into communities, and partnered with other nonprofits to meet the specific needs of their local population. In addition, our nation's museums opened 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 and helping veterans heal physically and psychologically, to creating energy efficient public buildings and collecting food for needy families.

Congress reauthorized IMLS in late 2018 by enacting the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (Public Law No: 115-410). This legislation was passed with widespread bipartisan support by unanimous consent in the Senate and by a vote of 331 to 28 in the House, showing Congress' bipartisan support for the agency's programs and a commitment to its funding. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants leverage significant private resources while supporting museums in every state.

We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2022 to support the important work museums do in our districts. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to bolster economic recovery, serve our schools and communities, and preserve 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
U.S. Representative

David B. McKinley, P.E.
U.S. Representative

Chellie Pingree
U.S. Representative

Andy Barr
U.S. Representative

(For more information or to sign onto this letter with one of its leads, please contact Darian Harbeck with Rep. Tonko at darian.harbeck@mail.house.gov, Allie Hildebrand with Rep. McKinley at allie.hildebrand@mail.house.gov, Evan Johnston with Rep. Pingree at evan.johnston@mail.house.gov, or Claire Osborn with Rep. Barr at claire.osborn@mail.house.gov.)

FY 2022 Senate OMS Sign-on Letter

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

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 fiscal year (FY) 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

Museums across the country are struggling with the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Survey data](#) shows that one out of every three museums may shutter permanently without immediate support. This would amount to the loss of 12,000 museums and 124,000 jobs. 30 percent of museums remain closed since the March 2020 lockdown and those that have reopened are operating on an average of 35 percent of their regular attendance—a reduction that is unsustainable. Despite these challenges, museums continue to meet the needs of their communities—from providing spaces for remote classrooms to providing lesson plans, online learning opportunities, and learning kits for teachers and families. OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through administering CARES Act grants and providing science-based information and recommended practices to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to staff and visitors engaging in the delivery of museum services.

Despite its small size, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is the largest dedicated source of investment in our nation's museums, which typically support more than 700,000 jobs and contribute \$50 billion annually to the U.S. economy. OMS funding plays a significant role in this economic impact by helping museums reach more visitors and spur community development. In addition to their economic benefits, OMS grants support museums' advancements in areas such as public health upgrades, 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.

Museums will be vital to the recovery of communities, big and small, urban and rural, all across the country. The demand for museum services will be greater than ever. At a time when school and community resources are strained, museums are working overtime to fill the gaps. In normal times, museums welcome annually 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. Prior to the pandemic, museums opened 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 working to address a wide range of our nation's greatest challenges. For example, some museums are conducting medical research and creating energy efficient public buildings, while others are helping veterans heal physically and psychologically and collecting food for needy families.

Congress reauthorized IMLS in late 2018 by enacting the Museum and Library Services Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-410). This legislation passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and by a wide margin of 331 to 28 in the House, showing Congress' renewed bipartisan support for the agency's programs and its commitment to providing funding. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants leverage significant private resources while supporting museums in every state.

We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2022 to support the important work museums do in our districts. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to bolster economic recovery and continue to serve our schools and communities, and preserve 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.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

(For more information or to sign onto this letter, please contact Anisa Dhillon with Senator Gillibrand at anisa_dhillon@gillibrand.senate.gov or Rowan Bost with Senator Collins at rowan_bost@collins.senate.gov.)