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## FY 2023 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 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

The pandemic has inflicted profound damage on US museums, the vast majority of which are 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organizations. [Survey data](#) shows museum field will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels of staffing, revenue, and attendance. Far fewer museums than initially expected are in danger of permanent closure and tens of thousands of jobs were saved thanks to several federal relief programs. However, 2021 proved to be another painful year in which operating income sank further and attendance was down nearly 40 percent for many of our nation's museums. Despite the tremendous financial and psychological stress caused by the pandemic, museum professionals are filling the gaps to meet the needs of their communities. They are demonstrating the critical role museums play in our country's infrastructure and deepening their social impact in their communities.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through its CARES Act and American Rescue Plan grants for museums, 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 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 essential community infrastructure and 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 2023 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](mailto:darian.harbeck@mail.house.gov), Allie Hildebrand with Rep. McKinley at [allie.hildebrand@mail.house.gov](mailto:allie.hildebrand@mail.house.gov), Evan Johnston with Rep. Pingree at [evan.johnston@mail.house.gov](mailto:evan.johnston@mail.house.gov), or Claire Osborn with Rep. Barr at [claire.osborn@mail.house.gov](mailto:claire.osborn@mail.house.gov).)

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## FY 2023 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) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

The pandemic has inflicted profound damage on US museums, the vast majority of which are 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organizations. [Survey data](#) shows museum field will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels of staffing, revenue, and attendance. Far fewer museums than initially expected are in danger of permanent closure and tens of thousands of jobs were saved thanks to several federal relief programs. However, 2021 proved to be another painful year in which operating income sank further and attendance was down nearly 40 percent for many of our nation's museums. Despite the tremendous financial and psychological stress caused by the pandemic, museum professionals are filling the gaps to meet the needs of their communities. They are demonstrating the critical role museums play in our country's infrastructure and deepening their social impact in their communities. OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through administering CARES Act and American Rescue Plan 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 are essential community infrastructure and 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 2023 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 Caitlin Rooney with Senator Gillibrand at [caitlin\\_rooney@gillibrand.senate.gov](mailto:caitlin_rooney@gillibrand.senate.gov) or Molly Ryan with Senator Collins at [molly\\_ryan@collins.senate.gov](mailto:molly_ryan@collins.senate.gov).)**