

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt 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 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

U.S. museums, the vast majority of which are 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organizations, still are experiencing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on staff and resources. Survey data shows museum field will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels of staffing, revenue, and attendance. Despite the tremendous financial and psychological stress caused by the pandemic, museum professionals helped fill the gaps to meet local needs. They continue to demonstrate 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 relief 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. Its Communities for Immunity partnership is working to boost COVID-19 vaccine confidence in communities across the country.

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 are 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 2024 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 D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Andy Barr
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



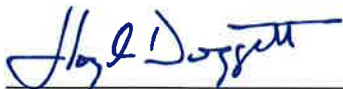
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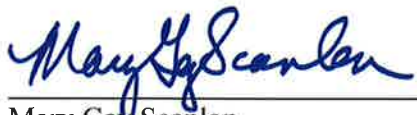
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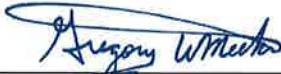
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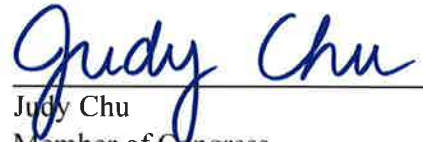
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Doris Matsui
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Wiley Nickel
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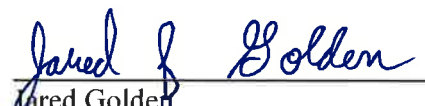
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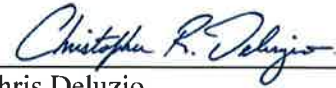
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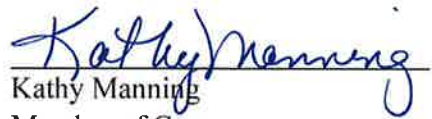
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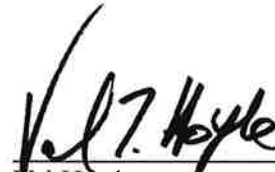
Greg Casar
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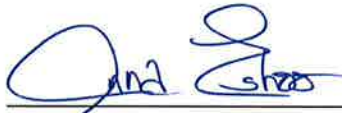
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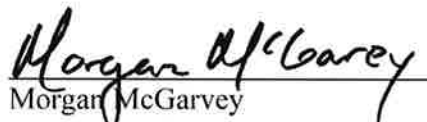
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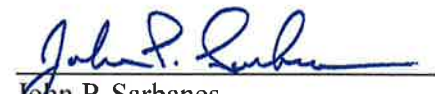
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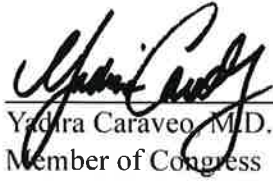
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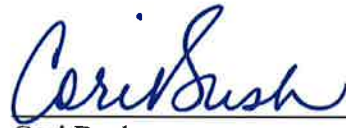
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Emilia Strong Sykes
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Sara Jacobs
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Cori Bush
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Elise M. Stefanik
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Jason Crow (D-CO-6)
Diana DeGette (D-CO-1)
Brittany Pettersen (D-CO-7)
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Rick Larsen (D-WA-2)
Kim Schrier, M.D. (D-WA-8)
Adam Smith (D-WA-9)
Gwen S. Moore (D-WI-4)

* For your reference, here is the list of the **113 Representatives** who signed the letter alphabetical by state.