

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

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) 2024 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 show that the 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, attendance is down nearly 40 percent for many of our nation's museums. Despite the tremendous financial and psychological stress caused by the pandemic, museum professionals filled the gaps to meet the needs of their communities. They continue to demonstrate the critical role museums play in our country's infrastructure and deepened their social impact in their communities. OMS has provided critical leadership to the museum community through administering 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 helped 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 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 are vital to the recovery of communities, big and small, urban and rural, all across the country. Pre-pandemic, 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. 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 2024 to support the important work museums do in our states. 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.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



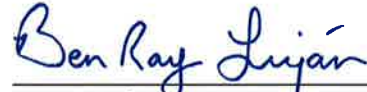
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



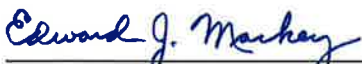
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



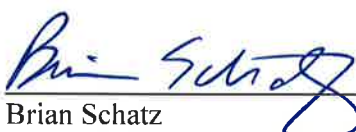
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

For your reference, here is the list of the **41 Senators** who signed the letter alphabetical by state.

Mark Kelly (D-AZ)
Diane Feinstein (D-CA)
Alejandro Padilla (D-CA)
Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Christopher S. Murphy (D-CT)
Michael Bennett (D-CO)
Thomas R. Carper (D-DE)
Chris Coons (D-DE)
Jon Ossoff (D-GA)
Raphael Warnock (D-GA)
Brian Schatz (D-HI)
Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
Richard J. Durbin (D-IL)
Ed Markey (D-MA)
Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)
Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Angus S. King, Jr. (I-ME)
Gary C. Peters (D-MI)
Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
Tina Smith (D-MN)
John Tester (D-MT)
Margaret Wood Hassan (D-NH)
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
Cory A. Booker (D-NJ)
Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
Jacky Rosen (D-NV)
Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
Ron Wyden (D-OR)
Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA)
Jack Reed (D-RI)
Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
Tim Kaine (D-VA)
Bernard Sanders (I-VT)
Maria Cantwell (D-WA)
Joe Manchin III (D-WV)