



Our Priorities for Congress

Funding

1. **Protect Legally Awarded Funding:** We urge Congress to oppose the withholding of federal funds legally promised to nonprofit grantees, including museums. Congress must insist that executive agencies honor their obligations to disburse funds for grants made in accordance with Congressional appropriations.
2. **Support Funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS):** We urge Congress to support at least \$55.5 million for fiscal year 2025 and 2026 (same level as FY 2024) for the Office of Museum Services (OMS) at IMLS. Strongly oppose the drastic funding cuts approved by the House Appropriations Committee. IMLS is the primary agency helping museums serve their communities.

Once circulated, please sign on to the bipartisan appropriations letters calling for ‘robust funding’ for OMS for FY 2026 being led by Representatives Tonko (D-NY), Pingree (D-ME), Barr (R-KY), and Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and by Senator Gillibrand (D-NY).

3. **Remove House Earmark Ban:** We urge House members to lift the unreasonable and unfair ban that makes museums ineligible for House Community Project Funding in the annual appropriations process. Museums should be allowed to compete on their own merits.

Tax Policy

1. **Incentivize Charitable Giving:** We urge Congress to pass the bipartisan Charitable Act (S. 317/H.R. 801) to allow taxpayers who do not itemize to deduct charitable gifts. Charitable gifts account for more than one-third of museums’ annual operating funds and a majority of their collections. Limitations on these incentives could have a chilling effect on their ability to attract donations needed to serve their communities and build their collections. **Senators wishing to cosponsor should contact the offices of James Lankford (R-OK) or Chris Coons (D-DE). Representatives should contact the offices of Blake Moore (R-UT) or Danny Davis (D-IL).**
2. **Preserve the Deductibility of Gifts to Museum Collections:** The vast majority of objects in museum collections arrived by gift. A previous restriction on the deductibility of such gifts, in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, led to a dramatic decline in giving, and in response Congress reversed it in 1990.
3. **Oppose Taxing Nonprofits:** We urge Congress to oppose proposals to tax earned revenue and investment income of nonprofit charitable organizations, including museums.

Join the New Congressional Museums Caucus! Representatives Paul Tonko (D-NY) and Mike Turner (R-OH) are establishing a bipartisan Congressional Museum Caucus for Members of Congress who support museums. Please contact Darian Harbeck (darian.harbeck@mail.house.gov) in Paul Tonko’s office or Clare Pavell (clare.pavell@mail.house.gov) in Mike Turner’s office to join the caucus.



Why Your Constituents Value Museums

Museums serve ALL people and communities across America. They ARE critical infrastructure.

Museums enable learning and inspiration for people of all ages. Americans understand the educational value of museums – 92% of Americans think museums are non-partisan providers of educational content and 97% believe that museums are educational assets for their communities.

- Museums spend 75% of their education budget on K-12 programs and welcome approximately 55 million visits each year from students.
- All around the country, many families and schools use local museums as classrooms.

Museums fuel economic development and strengthen communities, cities, and regions. It's no wonder that when organizations compile the list of America's Best Cities, they place the greatest weight on amenities, such as museum density.

- Museums contribute \$50 billion to the U.S. economy each year, generate over \$12 billion in tax revenue and have been credited in some areas with leading economic rejuvenation.
- Museums play a pivotal role in developing the workforce by creating entry-level positions, apprenticeship programs, and afterschool youth programs that serve as entry ramps into the workforce.

Museums provide people of all interests with gathering spaces. There are more museums than McDonalds in the United States. More than 22,000 rural, urban, and suburban museums shape American life inviting people to learn, grow and belong.

- Many museums are either free *all the time* or offer free or low-cost admission programs such as the Blue Star Families and Museum for All.
- 33% of Americans said that they visited at least one museum each year outpacing the percentage of Americans that attend a sporting event.

Most importantly, support for museums is important to the American people.

- 96% of Americans would approve of lawmakers who support museums.
- 96% of Americans want to maintain or increase federal funding for museums.

Continued funding and policy support will ensure museums remain accessible, innovative, and impactful for all Americans. Every state is home to museums exploring science, history, culture, and art, yet their full value and influence remain underrecognized. Museums enjoy overwhelming public support. With the public's support, we ask lawmakers to invest in these vital institutions.