

March 13, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the nation's 17,000+ museums, serving every congressional district and communities throughout the country, the **American Association of Museums**, National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day, urges you to increase federal support for the arts and culture:

- **Promote life-long learning** by approving the FY 2008 budget request of nearly \$40 million for grants to museums within Institute of Museum and Library Services in the FY 2008 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.
- **Protect and enhance America's cultural heritage** with increased funding for the federal cultural agencies, including increases for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities in the FY 2008 Interior appropriations bill.
- **Encourage increased citizen contributions to the arts and culture**, permanently passing tax legislation that enables individuals to roll over their IRA funds to charities without penalty and permits artists to take a fair-market deduction for contributions of their own work to museums.

Museums in every Congressional district bring heightened local and national visibility to their communities in numerous ways: by promoting travel and tourism, supporting and fostering local economic development, employing citizens in the community, revitalizing downtowns with signature buildings, attracting relocating businesses and families, and providing local artists and scientists with venues to create and present original work and conduct exciting research. American museums include every type of institution, from arboretums to zoos, from presidential libraries to children's museums. And, across the country these important centers of learning devote more than 18 million instructional hours to elementary and secondary education programs, regularly bringing traveling exhibits to local schools and hosting interactive school field trips.

Perhaps most importantly, museums provide every citizen the opportunity to engage with history, science and art. Museums tell the stories of our toughest struggles and our greatest accomplishments. Museums across the country play critical civic roles as centers of learning for students, teachers, families and citizens of all ages. In America's museums visitors come to know the stories of other cultures and to achieve a deeper understanding of their own neighborhoods, our country, and nations and cultures around the world. They are also places for quiet reflection where you can find new perspectives and ideas. The long-standing bipartisan tradition of federal support for museums and cultural agencies acting in the public interest is irreplaceable. Museums across the country thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Kim Igoe
Interim President and CEO