

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the nation's more than 17,500 museums, the American Association of Museums (AAM) is pleased to be a national co-sponsor of the 2009 Arts Advocacy Day.

We respectfully request that Congress increase federal support for a range of important cultural and educational investments in our communities:

- **Reauthorize the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** – The museum field has united around a proposal to broadly expand the reach of museum support with a mix of federal and state funding streams to strengthen what an IMLS report has called a “complex funding patchwork” that reflect gaps in the network of support at the local, state, and national levels.
- **Increase Funding for IMLS’ Office of Museum Services** – We request \$50 million to support a wide range of museums – including aquariums, arboretums, archaeological museums, art museums, botanical gardens, children’s museums, culturally specific museums, historic sites, history museums, maritime museums, military museums, natural history museums, nature centers, planetariums, presidential libraries, science and technology centers, zoological parks, and other specialty museums – in the FY 2010 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.
- **Consider the Impact of No Child Left Behind on Museums** – We urge Congress to consider the impact that NCLB has had on museum visits by schools. NCLB has had a strikingly negative effect on art, science and history education, and museum visits have decreased as a result. More than one third (36 percent) of all school districts have cut elementary social studies instruction – by an average of 76 minutes a week – while arts education is down at 16 percent of the schools and science at 28 percent of the schools.

We also urge Congress to consider the ways in which **Museums are Economic Engines**:

- Museums employ more than a half-million Americans.
- Museums spend an estimated \$14.5 billion annually on goods and services in their communities.
- Museums rank among the top three family vacation destinations. Visitors to cultural and heritage destinations stay 53% longer and spend 36% more money than other kinds of tourists.

Museums have been very hard hit by this recession, laying off workers and cutting back on services. With museums preserving and protecting more than one billion objects, these precious objects are also at risk. Supporting museums has a rippling effect throughout the economy – it employs workers, purchases local goods and services, educates communities, and preserves our national heritage and culture for generations to come.

For the American people – who rate museums as a more reliable source of historical information than books, teachers, or even personal accounts by grandparents or other relatives – museums are both a window to the past and an inspiration for the future.

Sincerely,



Ford Bell, DVM
President