

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 Arts Advocacy Day 2010. 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 comprehensive proposal to broadly expand the reach of support for museums 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 2011 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.
- **Consider the Role of Museums in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization** – As you consider education policy in the 111th Congress we urge you to consider the vital contribution museums make to lifelong learning. Museums spend more than \$1 billion annually on educational programming and provide more than 18 million instructional hours annually to students and educators, including educational programming for students, bringing traveling exhibits into schools, and professional development for teachers. Museum experiences reach students in ways that textbooks and classroom instruction cannot.

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 and have been forced to lay off workers and cut back their hours, even as the demand for their services rises. Museums preserve, protect and share with the public more than one billion objects, which 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