The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Congress  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Congress  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

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 FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. The Office of Museum Services was approved to receive $38.6 million annually in its most recent reauthorization.

Despite its small size, the IMLS Office of Museum Services is the largest dedicated source of investment in our nation’s museums, which employ over 400,000 Americans and directly contribute $21 billion to the U.S. economy each year. OMS funding multiplies this economic impact by helping museums reach more visitors and spur community development. In addition to their economic benefits, OMS grants also support museums’ advancements in areas such as 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.

The demand for museum services is greater than ever. At a time when school and community resources are strained, museums are working overtime to fill the gaps. Every year, they welcome 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. In addition, our nation’s museums are opening 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 part of a robust nonprofit community working to address a wide range of our nation’s greatest challenges, from conducting medical research to helping veterans heal physically and psychologically, and from creating energy efficient public buildings to collecting food for needy families.

In 2010, the Institute of Museum and Library Services was unanimously reauthorized by both the House and Senate. The agency is highly accountable, and its competitive, peer-reviewed grants leverage significant private resources while supporting museums in every state. The reauthorization contained several provisions to further support museums, particularly at the state level, but many of these activities cannot be accomplished without sustained funding.
We urge the Subcommittee to support robust funding for the IMLS Office of Museum Services for FY 2017 to support the important work museums are doing in our districts. This vital funding will aid museums of all types and enable them to continue bolstering the economy, serving our schools and communities, and preserving 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,

Paul Tonko

Leonard Lance

Louise M. Slaughter

David B. McKinley, P.E.

Robert A. Brady

Debbie Dingell

Bonnie Watson Coleman

Ann McLane Kuster

Ann Kirkpatrick

Kathy Castor

Frederica S. Wilson

Jackie Speier
Susan Brooks
Tony Cárdenas
Raúl M. Grijalva
Dave Loebsack
Kyrsten Sinema
Tulsi Gabbard
Chris Van Hollen
Ron Kind
Scott Peters
Mark Takano
Kathleen M. Rice
Judy Chu
Sean Patrick Maloney
Niki Tsongas
John Delaney
Katherine Clark
Collin C. Peterson
Adam Smith
Chaka Fattah
G. K. Butterfield
Don Young
Albie Sires
Daniel W. Lipinski
Joe Courtney
Rubén Hinojosa

Barbara Lee
Peter Welch
Carolyn B. Maloney
Tim Murphy
Marcia Fudge
Al Green
Yvette D. Clarke
Alcee L. Hastings
Jan Schakowsky
Stephen F. Lynch
Steve Cohen
Adam B. Schiff
William Lacy Clay
John Garamendi
Mike Coffman
Charles B. Rangel
Diana DeGette
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Luis V. Gutiérrez
John Conyers Jr.
Doris Matsui
John P. Sarbanes
Donna F. Edwards
Ben Ray Luján
André Carson

Brian Higgins

Lloyd Doggett

Donald M. Payne, Jr.

Linda T. Sánchez

Beto O’Rourke

Andy Bass

Karen Bass

Sanford Bishop

Brendan F. Boyle

Emanuel Cleaver

Barbara Comstock

Kevin Cramer

Susan Davis

Mark DeSaulnier

Robert J. Dold
Mike Thompson

Nydia Velázquez

Joe Wilson