

AAM President Ford W. Bell made the following statement following President Obama Signing the Museum and Library Services Act of 2010

“With his signature today on this vital legislation to reauthorize the Institute of Museum and Library Services, President Obama has recognized the essential role that museums and libraries play in our communities.

“Enactment of this important legislation comes after a long process that included collaboration and coordination among all sectors of the museum field. With national, state, and regional museum associations working together, I am proud that our museum field was able to reach consensus and propose a unified agenda to Capitol Hill.

“I am especially pleased that this bill includes several provisions offered by the museum field: to enhance conservation and preservation, to improve emergency preparedness and response, and to build statewide capacity. It is a particular victory for our field that the bill also specifically supports efforts at the state level to leverage museum resources, including statewide needs assessments and the development of state plans to improve and maximize museum services throughout the state. These provisions are a huge accomplishment for our field.

“IMLS is a uniquely important federal agency, supporting museums of all types, sizes, and in every geographical area of our nation. Its competitive, peer-reviewed grant programs support vital educational programming, conservation and preservation of important collections, professional development for museum staff, and investments in technology to help museums serve their communities. The agency is playing a key role in fostering innovation and creativity, two of the most critical skills to compete in the 21st century. I am pleased that the bill reauthorizes this vital agency for five more years.

“We are very grateful for the leadership of Senators Jack Reed (D-RI), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Richard Burr (R-NC), with whom we worked closely to craft a bill that incorporated the museum field’s proposals. As President of AAM, I especially appreciate [Senator Reed’s comments on the Senate Floor](#) about the role that national associations like AAM played in building consensus - and momentum - for this legislation. Many of my colleagues in the museum field also deserve much credit for their hard work in enacting this bill.

“I also greatly appreciate the leadership of Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) and Tom Petri (R-WI), who led the [debate on the House Floor](#). I am proud to note that Congressman Grijalva cited AAM statistics about the essential role that museums play in society, including how many jobs they create, how they spur tourism, and how much they contribute to local economies.

“Finally, I wish to thank everyone who took action when this bill was being considered by the House and Senate. It is heartening that thousands of museum advocates have used www.speakupformuseums.org to urge Congress to support this legislation. It will take all of us to continue to see progress, both in Washington DC and at the state and local level.

“Passage of this bill unanimously by both the House and Senate is another victory for the museum field. It is clear that we have established excellent relationships on Capitol Hill, and I look forward to having museum advocates from across the country come to Washington, DC for the 2011 [Museums Advocacy Day](#) on February 28 and March 1 to continue the drumbeat to Congress that museums are essential, and worthy of federal support. The next test will be when Congress determines funding for museums in the fiscal year 2012 budget, which will begin as soon as the 112th Congress is sworn in on January 5, 2011. We’ll need every museum supporter – staff, trustees, volunteers, and students – standing together, speaking with one voice to effectively make our case.”