

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 31, 2010

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services and Education  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Minority Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services and Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing to thank you for your support for the Institute of Museum and Library Services's Office of Museum Services (OMS) and to urge the Subcommittee to support \$50 million for OMS in the FY 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

The demand for museum services is greater than ever. At a time when school resources are strained and many families cannot afford to travel or make ends meet, museums are working overtime to fill the gaps – providing more than 18 million instructional hours to schoolchildren, bringing art and cultural heritage, dynamic exhibitions and living specimens into local communities, partnering with other nonprofits to encourage national service and volunteerism, and offering free or reduced admission. Museums are part of a robust nonprofit community working to address our nation's greatest challenges, from creating energy efficient public buildings to collecting food, funding and other resources for needy families and individuals.

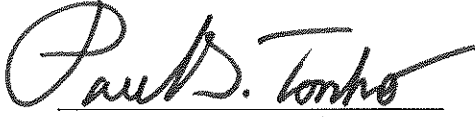
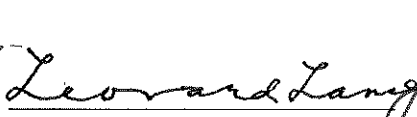
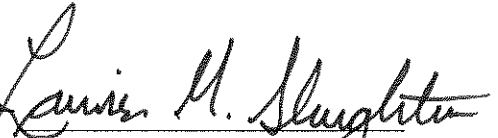
Unfortunately, museums are struggling significantly in these difficult economic times. They are being forced to cut back on hours, educational programming, community services and jobs. And according to the 2005 *Heritage Health Index*, at least 190 million artifacts are at risk, suffering from light damage and harmful and insecure storage conditions. Many museums also rely heavily on philanthropic donations to keep admission rates low and provide new exhibitions for their communities. According to a 2009 report by the Giving USA Foundation, museums and other cultural organizations saw their charitable donations fall by nearly 10 percent in 2008.

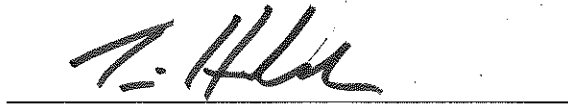
The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary federal agency responsible for supporting the nation's more than 17,500 museums, and its Office of Museum Services has been essentially flat funded over the past several years. Although the agency has been successful in creating and supporting advancements in areas such as technology, lifelong community learning and conservation and preservation efforts, only a small fraction of the nation's museums are currently being reached, and many highly rated grant applications go unfunded each year.

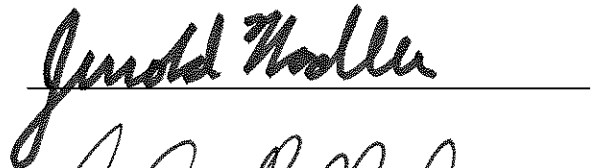
We recommend a significant new investment in our nation's museums to support the important work they are doing in our communities, especially in these difficult economic times. Specifically, we urge the Subcommittee to support \$50 million for IMLS' Office of Museum Services for FY11. This vital funding will aid museums of all types – 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, science and technology centers, zoological parks, and other specialty museums – and enable them to continue 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 robust new investment to strengthen and sustain the work of our nation's museums.

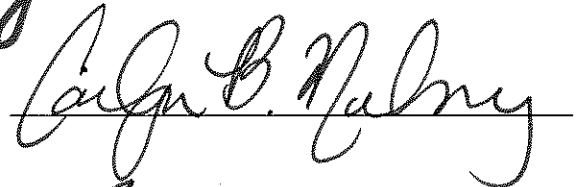
Sincerely,

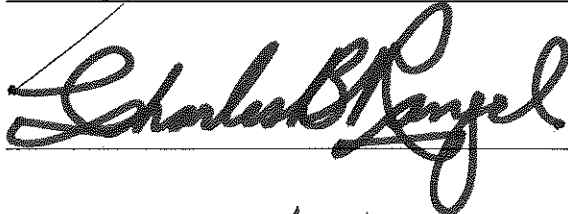
 Paul D. Tonko Member of Congress	 Leonard Lance Member of Congress	 Louise M. Slaughter Member of Congress
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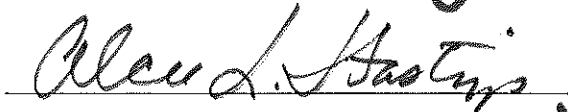


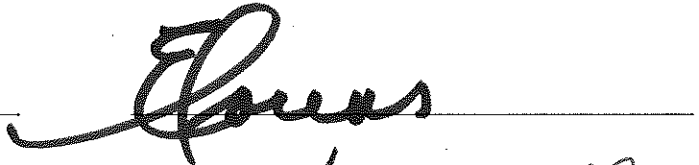


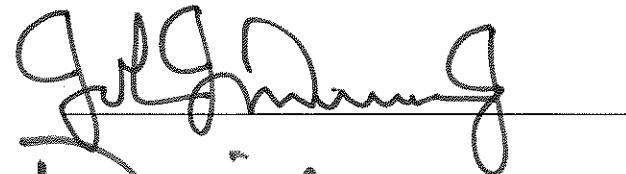


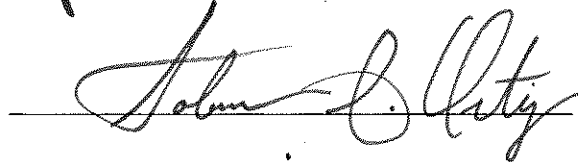


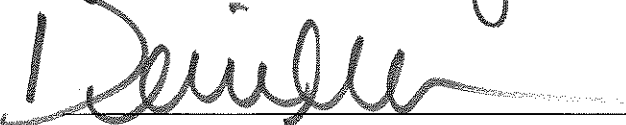














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