

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

July 1, 2009

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

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services and Education  
2358-B Rayburn 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 (IMLS)'s Office of Museum Services (OMS) and to urge the Subcommittee to support \$50 million for OMS in the FY 2010 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, 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 recent report by the Giving USA Foundation, museums and other cultural organizations saw their charitable donations fall by nearly 10% in 2008.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary federal agency responsible for supporting the nation's 17,500 plus 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.

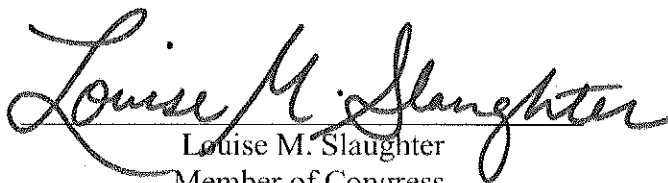
We recommend a significant new investment in our nation's museums to support the important work they are doing in our communities, especially in these difficult economic times. Specifically, we urge the Subcommittee to support \$50 million for IMLS' Office of Museum Services for FY10. This vital funding 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.

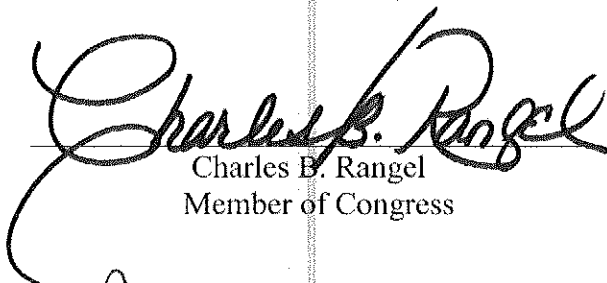
Sincerely,



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



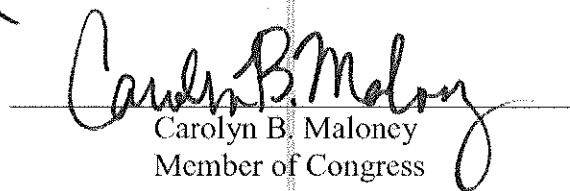
Louise M. Slaughter  
Member of Congress



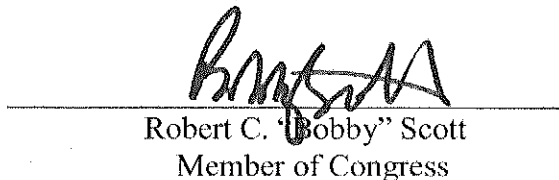
Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress



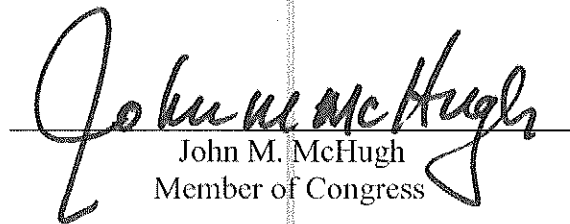
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress



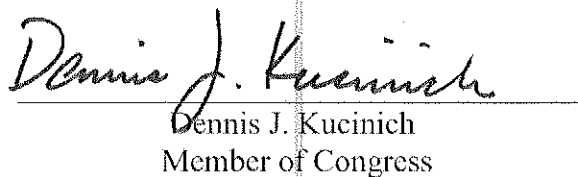
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



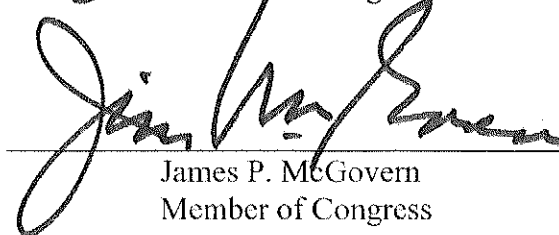
John M. McHugh  
Member of Congress



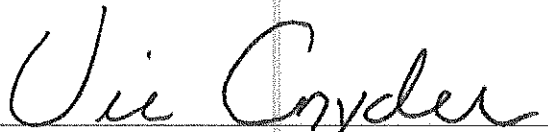
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



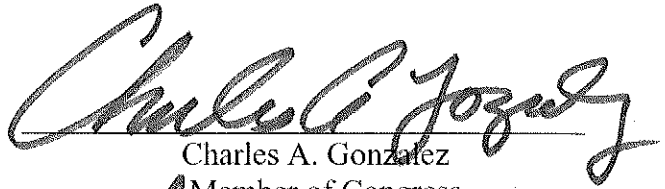
Dennis J. Kucinich  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



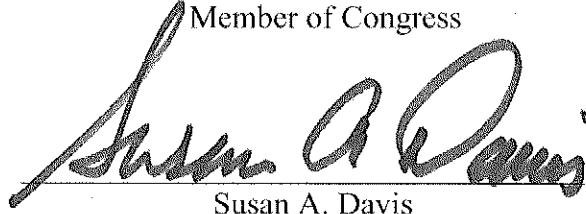
Vic Snyder  
Member of Congress



Charles A. Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



Rush D. Holt  
Member of Congress



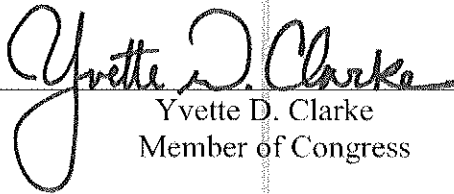
Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress



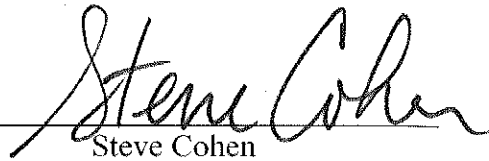
Todd Russell Platts  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



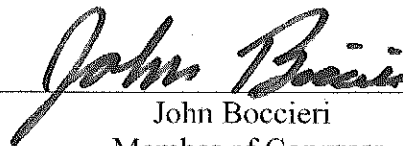
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Phil Hare  
Member of Congress



David Loeb sack  
Member of Congress



John Boccieri  
Member of Congress



Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress