



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 291

Resolution calling upon President Donald Trump to fully fund the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and to not diminish or eliminate the agency in any form.

By Council Member Van Bramer

Whereas, The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), established by the United States (U.S.) Congress in 1996, is an independent federal agency that provides support to further empower museums and libraries to support civic life and the nation's wellbeing; and

Whereas, The IMLS was created in order to consolidate the Department of Education's Library Programs Office, established in 1956 as the first federal program of direct support to public libraries, and the Institute of Museum Services, established in 1976 with the primary purpose of providing general operation support grants to museums and other cultural institutions, because lawmakers at the time saw "great potential in an Institute that is focused on the combined roles that libraries and museums play in our community life, in support of research, learning, and entertainment, and in support of American culture and history"; and

Whereas, The IMLS administers grant programs, including population-based state formula grants for libraries, peer-reviewed competitive discretionary grants, cooperative agreements, and partnerships that support both museums and libraries; and

Whereas, The IMLS is also responsible for conducting policy research, analysis and data collection to extend and improve museum, library and information services across the country as well as developing interagency collaborations to achieve national policy; and

Whereas, In 2016, the IMLS received appropriations totaling \$230 million, which accounts for almost

0.006 percent of the \$4 trillion that the Congressional Budget Office projects that the federal government will spend in 2017; and

Whereas, Since its inception, despite relatively modest congressional appropriations, the IMLS has been instrumental in supporting and expanding access to museum and library services at the state and local levels; and

Whereas, According to its website, the IMLS is the primary federal support for an estimated 35,000 museums of all disciplines, including aquariums, botanic gardens, children's museums, history, science and technology centers and zoos, and 123,000 libraries of all types, including academic, public, research and tribal; and

Whereas, As president-elect, Donald Trump announced a plan to reduce federal spending by \$10.5 trillion over ten years; and

Whereas, In 2015, during the last Congressional session, U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan proposed eliminating the IMLS and, after a February 14, 2017 internal memo circulated within the Office of Management and Budget obtained by The New York Times suggested the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities, there is concern that the institute could be next; and

Whereas, Library services in New York City (NYC) are provided three independent systems which collectively operate four research library centers in Manhattan and 217 local library branches across the five boroughs; and

Whereas, In addition to free and open access to books, periodicals, electronic sources and non-print materials which may be borrowed through a lending service, NYC libraries are multipurpose community and information centers, safe havens for children after school, where immigrants and other non-native speakers can learn English and where anyone can obtain free tax assistance and business services, including technical

assistance programs for small businesses; and

Whereas, According to the IMLS' website, in fiscal year 2016 three grants totaling \$564,980 were awarded to NYC libraries, including the New York Public Library, which received \$295,010 to “develop and deliver a blended learning early literacy staff training in partnership with the NYC Early Childhood Professional Development Institute at the City University of New York”; and

Whereas, As a global cultural capital, NYC is home to hundreds of museums and cultural institutions, from the internationally renowned Metropolitan Museum of Art to community-based organizations such as the Edgar Allen Poe Cottage in the Bronx; and

Whereas, Museums bring history to life, they celebrate art, culture and heritage, and promote better understanding as well as encourage curiosity, dialogue and self-reflection; and

Whereas, According to the IMLS' website, in fiscal year 2016 nine grants totaling \$1,213,476 were awarded to NYC museums, including the Queens Museum of Art, which received \$150,000 to develop Corona, Queens: A Dignified Neighborhood for Immigrants, “a project aimed at creating new opportunities through an arts and cultural lens for civic engagement by equipping emerging immigrant neighborhood leaders with necessary tools for community engagement”; and

Whereas, Museums and libraries are relevant and vital institutions that connect, educate, engage and inform people from all walks of life; and

Whereas, The IMLS fulfills its mission to “inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement” through grant making, policy development and research that helps museums and libraries deliver invaluable services that make it possible for local communities and individuals to thrive; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon President Donald Trump to fully fund the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and to not diminish or eliminate the agency in any form.

CGR
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