

[please copy the following text, fill in the blanks, and paste it onto your letterhead]

[insert date]

[insert the following name and address for your elected official:

The Honorable Michael Honda
1713 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
FAX 202-225-2699

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
2112 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
FAX 202-225-6498

The Honorable Barbara Lee
2444 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
FAX 202-225-9817

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
2330 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
FAX 202-226-0350]

Re: 2009 Appropriations for the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Dear [Congressman or Congresswoman] [insert last name];

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development.

[Insert a paragraph about your museum, the audiences you serve, any past support received by IMLS, or projects you would like support for in the future]

Museums in America today collect, preserve, and exhibit the artifacts, documents, sites, and overall history of our nation for present and future generations of Americans. They protect the tangible – and sometimes intangible – evidence that tells the stories of the people, experiences, natural environs, achievements, challenges, and creativity of the United States and the world. Found in virtually every corner of the country, and in many different forms, museums are nonprofit and educational/research institutions and include art, natural history, science, children's and history museums, science centers, zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens.

The Office of Museum Services (OMS), under IMLS, awards grants to museums so that they may carry out these crucial services and roles in our society; and in 2003 Congress underscored the importance of these contributions by America's museums by passing the IMLS Reauthorization bill. For the past four fiscal years, unfortunately, funding for OMS – through the Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill – has remained flat precisely when: attendance at America's museums has increased; demand for museum educational services is growing; collections are at risk; and museum staff need professional development in conservation, education, and technology. See chart below:

Office of Museum Services Appropriations, FY2003 to present (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08
Appropriation	25.1	27.3	30.3	31.8	31.8	31.7

The President has requested approximately \$39 million for OMS in FY2009 – an \$8 million increase over last year’s appropriation (\$31 million). However, because of the four-year period of level funding (\$30-31 million) OMS has fallen well behind. Had funding continued to increase at the same rate over the last four years, OMS would very likely be receiving approximately \$45 million in appropriations in FY2009.

For this reason, museum service organizations have teamed up to collectively support the President’s request of \$39 million, and to request an additional \$6 million to reach the appropriate level of \$45 million. Such an increase would enable America’s museums to continue to promote and support lifelong learning and to protect our national heritage.

We respectfully request your support for this increase as Congress considers the FY2009 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

[insert your name]

[insert your title]

Cc: District office, FAX [insert the following district office FAX number for your elected official: Honda, 408-558-8086; Lee, 510-763-6538; Lewis, 909-335-9155; OR Roybal-Allard, 213-628-8578]
California Association of Museums, FAX 831-471-9381