



**PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED FY 2020 BUDGET FOR INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES and the TITLE VI/FULBRIGHT-HAYS PROGRAMS AND K-12 AMERICAN HISTORY & CIVICS PROGRAMS at the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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April 8, 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro:

**Summary:**

- **The Administration has recommended elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). We oppose this proposal and urge you to fund the IMLS at a level of \$270.6 million including \$38.6 million for the Office of Museum Services and \$232 million for the administration of the Library Services and Technology Act.**
- **The Administration has recommended elimination of the Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs at the Department of Education. We oppose this proposal. We urge you to fund the International Education and Foreign Language Studies account in FY 2020 at \$106.1 million, \$95.7 million for Title VI and \$10.4 million for Fulbright-Hays.**

- **The Administration has recommended elimination of two dedicated funding streams for K-12 history and civics education at the Department of Education. We oppose the termination of the American History and Civics Education Grants American History and Civics Academies programs. We ask that they be funded at a combined level for FY 20 of \$6,848,000 which is the amount authorized for both programs under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under the allocation formula in the ESSA, the grants program would receive \$5 million and the academies \$1.8 million.**

The National Coalition for History (NCH) is a consortium of more than 50 organizations that advocates and educates on federal legislative and regulatory issues affecting historians, archivists, political scientists, teachers, students, genealogists, and other stakeholders.

As researchers and conservators of American history and culture, we care deeply about these programs and the impact they have not only on our members but all citizens. We know Congress faces enormous fiscal challenges in crafting the federal budget for FY 20. However, eliminating these agencies and programs is short-sighted and the small savings realized would not outweigh the damage that would be incurred by our students and citizens.

### **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Its Office of Museum Services (OMS) awards grants to museums that support educating students, preserving collections, coordinating resources, and digitizing collections. The IMLS also administers the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which consolidates federal library programs while expanding services for learning and access to information resources. In 2018, Congress passed the Museum and

Library Services Act to reauthorize the IMLS until Fiscal Year 2025 and authorized increased funding for both museum and library services.

According to the IMLS, Museums pump more than \$50 billion into the U.S. economy annually, support more than 726,000 American jobs, generate \$12 billion in tax revenue, and spur tourism from around the world. Museums receive more than 55 million visits each year from student groups. Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics, and science in third grade than children who did not. People visited America's public libraries more than 1.3 billion times in 2015. More than 171 million people in America have library cards. Over 99% of public libraries offer free access to the Internet. 81% of people in the U.S. have visited a public library or bookmobile.<sup>1</sup>

The IMLS provides funding that benefits Americans of all ages. IMLS grants are awarded in every state and congressional district, but current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of the highly-rated grant applications it receives. We urge you to continue to fund the work of this vital agency.

### **Title VI/Fulbright-Hays International Education Programs**

We request that you include \$106 million in funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies for Fiscal Year 2020. This includes \$95.7 million for HEA-Title VI and \$10.4 million for Fulbright-Hays programs. These programs have not been increased since the precipitous \$53 million reduction begun in FY 2011. Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs have

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imls.gov/about/mission>

had a tremendous impact on our nation by developing a strong foundation in international education, research, and foreign language studies, especially in the less-commonly taught languages of U.S. strategic interest.

Strong academic programs in critical foreign languages and intensive training in multi-disciplinary regional studies -- including socio-economic, cultural, security, and religious and business aspects, among others -- are vital to our national security and global economic competitiveness. But beyond the intensive curriculum development and related academic programming resulting from these programs, Title VI resources make possible extensive outreach to K-12 classrooms, strong collaborations between four-year postsecondary institutions and community colleges, and strengthened ties between U.S. postsecondary institutions and international partners.

The programs funded under this account serve to strengthen the nation's educational infrastructure in areas where the need grows greater by the day. Unfortunately, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs have been weakened by budget reductions at the very time their importance has grown. Therefore, we strongly urge \$106 million for these programs to begin restoring funding and build on the progress made to this critical international and foreign language education infrastructure. This is a small but vitally important investment in our nation's education, national security, and economic competitiveness.

### **American History and Civics Grants and Academies**

In fiscal year 2002, Congress authorized the "Teaching American History" (TAH) grants program in the Department of Education. Nearly \$1 billion of federal dollars were appropriated

over the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to improve K-12 history education. In fiscal year 2012 Congress terminated funding for the TAH program. These small programs that were added in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 renewed the federal government's commitment to provide at least limited funding for the teaching of American history and civics.

Unfortunately, Congress has not come close to the amounts authorized in the ESSA. In FY 17 and FY 18, both programs combined were funded at \$3.5 million (\$1.8 million for the academies and \$1.7 million for the grants). In the FY 19 budget the total went up to \$4.8 million. While the academies stayed at \$1.8 million funding for the grants saw a major increase up to \$3 million.

These modest amounts have only allowed the U.S. Department of Education to award an extremely limited number of grants. For example, in FY 17 and FY 18 a total of only three grant projects were funded. In that time frame, funding was provided for only four academy projects.

Both these programs provide K-12 students with the historical context to appreciate and understand our democratic heritage and an understanding of how our government functions so that they can grow up to be informed citizens and voters. In addition, improving K-12 American history and civics education will be an important part of preparing for the commemoration of our Nation's upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,



Lee White  
Executive Director