The City of Worcester

Joseph M. Petty

Mayor of the City of Worcester

April 2, 2025

City Hall Room 305

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U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Representative Katherine Clark
U.S. Representative James McGovern
U.S. Representative William Keating
U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley
U.S. Representative Jake Auchincloss

U.S. Senator Edward Markey
U.S. Representative Richard Neal
U.S. Representative Stephen Lynch
U.S. Representative Lori Trahan
U.S. Representative Seth Moulton

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of mayors and city officials across Massachusetts, we thank you for your leadership in representing the needs of our communities. We are writing to express our deep concern over an executive order signed March 14, 2025 that would target federal funding to libraries and museums through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). IMLS is the single largest source of critical federal funding for libraries, however it only accounts for 0.003% of the federal budget.

In Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) received $3.6 million from IMLS' Grants to States Programs. This money funds several statewide services for everyone, including the full and partial salaries for MBLC staff, statewide research databases, Summer Reading, the Statewide eBook Program, statewide trainings for librarians to increase access for people with vision loss, early literacy development and grade level reading programs, and Interlibrary Loan. It is also critical to note that IMLS funding also supports museums in our communities.

Libraries offer the opportunity for members of the public to access materials at no cost or low cost to them. For individuals with visual impairments or other disabilities, it can be difficult to sustain a need or desire for reading materials that are usable for their needs. Most importantly, Interlibrary Loan offers the chance for library patrons to obtain materials that are not a part of their home library's collection. In towns that have smaller collections, Interlibrary Loan offers a gateway to materials throughout the Commonwealth.

As elected officials on the front lines, we know that libraries are more than spaces to hold reading materials. Libraries also serve as spaces that offer connections to social services and resources, support for small business owners and entrepreneurs, and they can serve as a space for community. Since their creation, American libraries have served to keep and circulate knowledge; they have remained dedicated to promoting intellectual freedom in our democracy. We urge the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to work together and across party lines to protect IMLS funding from harmful cuts and policy changes. As local leaders, we are directly accountable to the residents we serve. Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to protecting the well-being of all residents.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Petty, Mayor of Worcester
Cathleen DeSimone, Mayor of Attleboro
Dori A. Vecchio, Interim Town Manager of Auburn
Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager of Ayer
Margaret "Peg" Stone, Select Board Chair of Berlin
Robert F. Sullivan, Mayor of Brockton
E. Denise Simmons, Mayor of Cambridge
Charles Seelig, Town Administrator of East Bridgewater
Samantha Squailia, Mayor of Fitchburg
Charles Sisitsky, Mayor of Framingham
Michael J. Nicholson, Mayor of Gardner
Greg Verga, Mayor of Gloucester
Virginia "Ginny" Desorgher, Mayor of Greenfield
Melinda Barrett, Mayor of Haverhill
Brian A. DePeña, Mayor of Lawrence
Caesar Nuzzolo, Select Board Chair of Lunenburg
Jared C. Nicholson, Mayor of Lynn
David P. Beauregard, Jr., Mayor of Methuen
Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor of Newton
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor of Northampton
Ted Bettencourt, Mayor of Peabody
Sherry Patch, Town Administrator of Princeton
Leah Whiteman, Select Board Chair of Rutland
Austin J. Cyganiewicz, Town Administrator of Rutland
Dominick Pangalo, Mayor of Salem
Domenic J. Sarno, Mayor of Springfield