CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION

AGENDA ATTACHMENT 4

MEETING DATE: Thursday, August 24, 2017
AGENDA ITEM #: 11.C.
ITEM: FEDERAL BUDGET / INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND
LIBRARY SERVICES (IMLS)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
No action is recommended.
CORPORATE CHAMPIONS URGE ALL SENATORS TO SUPPORT FY18 LIBRARY FUNDING

Posted by: Adam Eisgrau  May 11, 2017  in Funding, Legislation, Washington Office News

If you’re part of or connected to the library world in any way, you know that the President’s “skinny budget” released in mid-March proposed eliminating the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the small and respected federal agency that administers bulk of federal library funding. It also “zeroed out” virtually all such appropriations anywhere in the federal government, including programs authorized by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program.

Happily, however, Congress just added $1 million to the IMLS FY 2017 budget in the omnibus spending act signed into law last week. Moreover, it specifically directs that $600,000 of that $1 million be used for LSTA-authorized purposes. It did so after one-third of the entire House of Representatives signed separate “Dear Appropriator” letters in support of slightly increased FY 2018 funding for LSTA ($186.6 million) and level funding for IAL ($27 million). Two similar bipartisan letters are now circulating in the Senate, where both programs also historically have enjoyed the support of approximately one-third of all Senators. ALA’s Fight for Libraries grassroots campaign for FY 2018 LSTA and IAL funding is aiming to increase that base of support to 51 Senators – a majority of all members of that chamber.

Today, that effort got an enormous boost when ALA delivered a powerful letter by eight leading national companies with collective revenue measured in billions of dollars to the offices of all Senators who have not already signed both the Senate LSTA and IAL letters urging them to do so. As Baker & Taylor, Follett School Solutions, Gale/Cengage, OverDrive, Peachtree Publishers, Penguin Random House, ProQuest and Rosen Publishing detail in the letter, they took such action because fundamentally: “[L]ibrary funding may be among the very best yielding and most leverageable investment that Congress makes across the entire federal budget. Libraries are thus very much critical national infrastructure: ubiquitous, indispensable and economically essential.”

ALA President Julie Todaro warmly welcomed today’s endorsement of libraries’ value and the companies’ specific appeal to all Senators to sign the Dear Appropriator letters now circulating, noting:

"The eight leading companies that today have urged all Senators to support critical federal library programs are spotlighting an often overlooked and critical aspect of libraries’ service to the public and the nation: libraries mean business. In addition to loaning print and electronic materials, modern libraries are job training, job search, workforce-building, entrepreneur-training, veteran-helping and business building centers at the core of almost every community in America. As these corporate leaders accurately recognize, libraries are among the highest yielding and most leverageable investments that Congress makes. Now is not the time to deprive taxpayers of that tremendous ROI by cutting federal library funding."

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the word to any and all other business owners you may know and ask them to join our corporate champions today.

Finally, corporate support is terrific, but if Senators don't hear from you – their constituent – they are far less likely to sign the "Dear Appropriator" letters on which we need 51 Senators' signatures by May 19. Please, check out our sortable tracker tool to see if both of your Senators have signed both the LSTA and IAL letters and, if they both haven't signed both, contact them – or re-contact them if you've already reached out – TODAY.

ABOUT ADAM EISGRAU

Adam Eisgrau is a 30-year veteran of Washington legal practice, government service, public and private sector lobbying, and strategic communications and policy consulting. Adam first handled digital copyright matters for ALA from 1995 to 1999 and rejoined the Washington Office in September 2014 as managing director of the Office of Government Relations. His issue portfolio includes copyright, privacy and surveillance, cybersecurity, encryption and data security. Adam received a BA in American Studies from Dartmouth College and his JD from Harvard Law.

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