



Museum of Science™

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Statement by
Ioannis Miaoulis
Museum of Science, Boston, President and Director
to the
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Service, and Education and Related Agencies
United States Senate
regarding the
Institute Of Museum and Library Services FY18 Budget
June 2, 2017

Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, and members of the subcommittee:

As president and director of the Museum of Science, Boston, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written statement in support of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. On behalf of our 1.4 annual visitors, 300 plus employees and 10.5 million students impacted by our engineering curricula programs, I respectfully urge the subcommittee to continue its investment in museums in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 by fully funding the Office of Museum Services (OMS) at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) at the authorized level of \$38.6 million. Most recently, a record 37 of your Senate colleagues joined a bipartisan letter calling for robust funding in FY18 for the OMS at the IMLS.

While we are grateful for the subcommittee's recommendation of \$31.269 million for OMS in its FY17 omnibus, we are equally alarmed by the proposed near elimination of the IMLS in the FY18 Administration's proposed budget. This relatively small federal competitive grant program is an important investment in fostering STEM education, revealing our planet's scientific wonders, educating students and lifelong learners, and bolstering local economies around the country. For every federal dollar the Museum receives in federal competitive grants, we are able to garner an additional \$3-\$4 in private and philanthropic donations. These museum funders realize the value of federal competitive peer-reviewed grants as something akin to the "Good Housekeeping" stamp of approval.

The Museum of Science OMS grants have enabled us to tackle the following research topics and visitor enhancements:

- We designed, prototyped and evaluated two new Design Challenges focused specifically on the active engagement of girls visiting the museum in coed student groups. This advanced the museum's ability to identify and anticipate gender differences, explore their significance, and adjust programming accordingly to better empower girls and women for living and working in a world where science, technology, engineering, and math skills are increasingly essential.

- We conducted a research study for the museum field to enhance understanding of the institutional conditions that prevent museum professionals from including people with disabilities in museum learning. We generated new understandings to alter institutional conditions, cultures, and practices so that museum professionals are better able to create museum learning experiences that are welcoming and inclusive of people with disabilities.
- We then designed exhibits that incorporated our new understandings and principles of universal design for learning and are inclusive of visitors with disabilities.
- We incorporated innovative digital projection system and highly sophisticated software platform to present cutting edge visitor experiences in earth and space science.
- We created a cluster of online and physical resources and tools for educators to implement new K-12 science standards that specifically focus on engineering and technology.

As a result, of these investments, we were able to better inform our visitors and the science museum field at large creating a multiplier effect throughout the nation. We know science museums are economic engines and play an essential role in the nation's educational infrastructure, spending more than \$2 billion a year on education. They are also community anchors, addressing challenges in the fields of engineering, technology, energy, health, and wellness.

IMLS is driven by its mission to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement by providing leadership through research, policy development, and grant making. OMS offers and administers competitive grant programs that undergo a rigorous peer review process in an effort to identify well-designed projects in communities across the country.

For these reasons, we urge to support the OMS at IMLS at its authorized level of \$38.6 million.