



North Dakota Library Association  
*Established 1906*

March 28, 2017

Honorable Senator Heitkamp  
220 E. Rosser Suite 228  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Senator Heitkamp:

The North Dakota Library Association (NDLA) promotes and advocates on behalf of library services and librarianship in North Dakota. Our association represents North Dakota's approximately 250 libraries, all of which serve our state's 750,000 residents. As the NDLA Legislative Committee, we are writing to you to express opposition to, and our grave concerns regarding President Trump's proposed elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

IMLS provides funding to libraries through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). These funds are a primary annual source of funding through the federal budget. IMLS distributes these funds to every state according to a population-based formula. Each state library determines how best to spend the allocated federal funds, which must be matched at the state level. Every state uses LSTA funds to meet their state's critical and unique needs.

The North Dakota State Library uses LSTA funds for databases, continuing education and professional training for librarians and library staff, Talking Books for the visually impaired and physically disabled, and other essential services, which, in many ways, form the backbone of North Dakota's library community. The elimination of the IMLS and LSTA funding will adversely impact our libraries, especially many rural libraries. It is not an exaggeration to point out that libraries will have to limit or potentially eliminate the services they provide.

Libraries today are more than books. They are centers of education and inquiry, civic engagement and culture, resources for entrepreneurs and those seeking employment. With the proliferation of information and misinformation online today, the skills of librarians have never been in greater demand or more important.

We realize the President's proposed budget is the start of a very complex and long process. However, because the cuts would have such a severe and crippling impact on North Dakota's library community, we are compelled to write this letter.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. We welcome the opportunity to visit with you and your staff to discuss this issue in greater detail. And we extend an invitation to you to tour our libraries and see first-hand the work we do and the services we provide through IMLS and LSTA.

On behalf of the members of NDLA, thank you for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

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