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Dear Representative / Senator,

On March 17th the President released a budget document calling for the elimination of several federal programs including the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as well as funds provided by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) that are vitally important to the lives of Floridians. I am writing you today to urge you to oppose the President's proposed action and to support continued funding for IMLS and LSTA.

The current LSTA appropriation is \$230 million, or \$.71 for each American, a modest investment that yields an enormous return. LSTA grants provide dollars, based on population, to each of the fifty states. This year Florida received \$8,259,897 in LSTA funds. These funds are administered by the Florida Department of State's Division of Libraries and Information Services.

Florida libraries and the people they serve also benefit from National Leadership Grants that are administered directly by IMLS. These funds provide statewide services to all Floridians as well as grants to local and regional organizations. They support much of the exciting innovation currently underway in Florida libraries.

In addition to grant administration, IMLS serves in the essential role of lead collaborator for the nation's libraries. IMLS monitors trends, helps libraries identify and develop opportunities for new innovative services, promotes sound impact evaluation practices, and collects and publishes statistics. It serves in this role with a light touch as a partner and collaborator.

Here are some of the services, funded by the LSTA appropriation that Floridians rely on and that would be eliminated by the President's proposal:

Support for E-Government and Workforce Recovery – Two programs, "Get Help Florida" and "The Right Service at the Right Time," enable Floridians to connect with federal, state, and local agencies to obtain the services they need.

Florida Memory Project - The Division of Library and Information Services has built an online collection of 539,680 digitized audio recordings, documents, photographs, films and video clips documenting the history of Florida and local communities. In 2015-16 the site had 104.9 million views and 31.5 million downloads. The Division is currently engaged in helping libraries, historical and cultural groups collaborate to digitize their communities' significant images and documents so these can be accessed online.

Florida Electronic Library - The Florida Electronic Library (FEL) provides Floridians with access to commercial information sources that are essential for students K through graduate school, job seekers and small business owners. In 2015-16 Floridians conducted 11,384,164 sessions and 21,775,013 database searches. For some school districts these are the only electronic resources available to students.

Florida Library Youth Program - The Florida Library Youth Program support local libraries' efforts to serve children, families, tweens and teens. It supports summer library programs all over the state to advance year-long learning and to help students avoid summer slump. In 2015-16, more than 1.2 million youths participated in over 43,400 programs.

Expanding Library Services – Division of Library and Information Services staff work closely with local library staff, officials, trustees and community members to ensure that Florida's public libraries are strong and vigorous. They collaborate to promote digital literacy skills, research electronic resources, implement statewide digitization programs, and encourage innovation.

Grants to Local Libraries – Each year the Division of Library and Information Services awards grants to local libraries. Recent projects include: Northwest Regional Library's "Scientist in Residence Program," Sarasota County Public Libraries and Historical Recourse's "Campaign for Grade-Level Reading," and Jacksonville Public Library's "Opportunity Works."

E-Rate Assistance - This statewide service helps libraries to obtain broadband service through the federal E-Rate program and to keep their technology infrastructure current. Because of E-rate savings, Floridians used public library computers 16.6 million times and participated in library technology training 2.9 million times in 2014-15.

Florida Library Leadership Program - This program builds and broadens leadership skills of Florida librarians.

Ask a Librarian - Ask a Librarian provides a collaborative virtual reference service enabling Floridians to chat, text or e-mail a librarian wherever they of need information.

Florida Library Delivery Service – This cost-effective service supports interlibrary loan of materials by moving books among libraries. In 2015-16 a total of 230,256 bags of materials were delivered.

Florida Library Webinars - By providing librarians with live and recorded training over the web, this program improves library services for Floridians. In 2015-16 a total of 975 sessions were viewed by library staff 29,683 times.

Florida Library Jobs - This service helps libraries find and hire qualified librarians and helps librarians find employment.

The Institute for Museum and Library Services and the Library Services and Technology Act provide a great benefit to Americans. Please do everything in your power to ensure that they continue.

Sincerely,



Elana Karshmer
FLA President