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## Museum and Library Union Launches Legal Battle Against White House to Stop Cuts

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The White House.  
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In the latest legal challenge to the **Trump administration** (<https://www.artnews.com/t/trump-administration/>) from the cultural sector, the

largest union of museum and library professionals in the United States has sued to block efforts to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The lawsuit was filed in in the US District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a union representing over 42,000 US cultural workers. It seeks a preliminary injunction against the Trump administration's dismissal of most of the IMLS staff.

The lawsuit also seeks to halt the cancellation of grants allocated by the institute, arguing that congressional approval was required before such cuts could be directed. "Congress is the only entity that may lawfully dismantle the agency, not the president and certainly not DOGE," the lawsuit states, adding that these cuts amount to "unlawful actions" that "threaten libraries, museums and the millions of people who rely on them across the nation."

The suit was filed by the nonprofit organization Democracy Forward and the law firm Gair Gallo Eberhard on Monday, April 7, and lists its defendants as Trump; IMLS's acting director, Keith Sonderling, and its acting administrator, Amy Gleason; and the US Office of Management and Budget and its director, Russel Vought.

On March 14, Trump **issued an executive order** (<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/03/17/president-trump-executive-order-institute-museum-library-services-wilson-center>) that called IMLS "unnecessary" and mandated that it, as well as six other federal agencies, "be eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law."

Last week, the general of 21 states have since filed a similar lawsuit in a Rhode Island court on behalf of the IMLS, which provides hundreds of millions in funding to museums, libraries and archives.

"Libraries and museums contain our collective history and knowledge, while also providing safe spaces for learning, cultural expression and access to critical public resources," Lee Saunders, the president of AFSCME, said in **a statement** (<https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/american-library-association-afscme-challenge-trump-administration-gutting-of-institute-of-museum-and-library-services>). "They represent the heart of our communities, and the cultural workers who keep these institutions running enrich thousands of lives every day. Library workers do everything from helping people apply for jobs to administering lifesaving care all while facing increasing violence on the job. Their work deserves support, not cuts."

## Amid Trump's **upheaval**

[\(https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2025/04/07/neh-grants-canceled-cuts/\)](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2025/04/07/neh-grants-canceled-cuts/) of the United States arts and culture sector, more than 1,200 grants that supported culture and history programs are estimated to have been cut by the National Endowment for the Humanities, according to National Humanities Alliance, a Washington, D.C.–based advocacy group.



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