

Illinois Attorney General Raoul Files Lawsuit to Protect Libraries and Museums

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Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 21 attorneys general, is suing the Trump administration to stop the dismantling of three federal agencies that provide services and funding supporting public libraries and museums, workers and minority-owned businesses nationwide. In March, the Trump administration issued an executive order that would dismantle federal agencies created by Congress that collectively provide hundreds of millions of dollars for programs in every state. As a result of this executive order, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) – one of the targeted agencies – has placed almost its entire staff on administrative leave and will cut hundreds of grants for state libraries and museums. The [lawsuit](#) filed today by Attorney General Raoul and the coalition seeks to stop the targeted destruction of the IMLS and two other agencies targeted in the administration’s order that millions of Americans rely on, especially those in underserved communities.

“The Institute of Museum and Library Services helps to ensure that art, culture, history and literacy are accessible for all,” Raoul said. “Illegally cutting grants jeopardizes critical library programs across the state that make library materials available to smaller communities and provide education and access to technology for underserved youth. Attempting to dismantle agencies created by Congress is a continuation of this administration’s unconstitutional and unlawful overreach.”

This executive order is the administration's latest attempt to dismantle federal agencies in defiance of Congress. Attorney General Raoul and the coalition are seeking to stop the dismantling of three agencies targeted in the administration's executive order:

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which supports museums and libraries nationwide through grantmaking, research, and policy development.
- The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), which promotes the growth and inclusion of minority-owned businesses through federal financial assistance programs.
- The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), which promotes the resolution of labor disputes.

As Attorney General Raoul and the coalition assert in the lawsuit, dismantling these agencies will harm communities throughout Illinois and the nation that rely on them to provide important services to the public, including funding their libraries, promoting minority-owned businesses and protecting workers' rights.

In 2024, IMLS invested \$180 million in libraries nationwide under its Grants to States Program, and Illinois received approximately \$5.7 million of that funding. The administration's action will threaten hundreds of library staff across the country who provide essential services to their communities.

"The Trump Administration's reckless actions to defund and dismantle IMLS has serious consequences for Illinois by placing its annual state grants at risk. Stripping these vital resources threatens the sustainability of our libraries and amounts to a disinvestment in an educated society," said Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. "As State Librarian, I'm committed to working with Attorney General Raoul and the 20 other states in fighting to restore and protect this vital funding, which is especially essential to underserved and rural communities across Illinois, and prevent any efforts to eliminate the IMLS."

In addition, the Trump administration has cut the staff of MBDA from 40 to just five individuals and has effectively stopped issuing new grants, hurting vulnerable small businesses across the country. The FMCS has slashed its staff from roughly 200 to fewer than 15 individuals and announced the termination of several of its core programs, making it harder for unionized workers to secure their rights.

Attorney General Raoul and the coalition argue that the executive order violates the Constitution and the Administrative Procedure Act by eliminating the programs of agencies

without any regard for the laws and regulations that govern each source of federal funding. The coalition argues that the president cannot decide to unilaterally override laws governing federal spending and that this executive order unconstitutionally overrides Congress's power to decide how federal funds are spent.

Joining Raoul in filing the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

This article appears on the [Attorney General's website](#).



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