



April 8, 2025



American Library Association Challenges Federal Actions in Lawsuit

Washington, D.C. – The American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) have filed a lawsuit against Keith Sonderling, Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and other federal officials, including President Donald Trump, in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. The complaint seeks declaratory and injunctive relief against actions taken to dismantle the IMLS, which the plaintiffs argue are unlawful and unconstitutional.

The lawsuit stems from an executive order issued by President Trump on March 14, 2025, titled “Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy,” which asserts that the IMLS is “unnecessary” and directs the agency to reduce its functions and personnel to the minimum required by law. Following this order, Keith Sonderling was designated as Acting Director of IMLS on March 20, 2025. The plaintiffs claim that Sonderling lacks the special competence required by Congress for the position and that his actions to dismantle the agency are politically motivated.

The complaint details a series of actions taken by the defendants to shut down the IMLS, including placing all staff on administrative leave, terminating grants, and firing all members of the National Museum and Library Services Board. These actions have already begun to harm libraries across the country, with some being forced to suspend services due to the loss of funding.

The plaintiffs argue that the executive order and subsequent actions violate the separation of powers and the Take Care Clause of the Constitution, as well as the Administrative Procedure Act. They seek a preliminary injunction to reverse these actions and halt any further steps to dissolve the agency until the court can fully consider the issues on the merits.

The ALA, founded in 1876, is a non-profit membership organization that promotes library services and librarianship. It has over 47,000 members and provides leadership in the development and improvement of library services. AFSCME is the largest trade union of public employees in the United States, representing tens of thousands of employees in libraries and museums.

The lawsuit highlights the critical role that libraries play in American society and the potential harm that could result from the dismantling of the IMLS. The plaintiffs emphasize the importance of preserving library services and ensuring access to information for all.

The complete lawsuit against the federal government is available [here](https://www.fundsforlearning.com/news/2025/04/american-library-association-files-lawsuit-against-federal-government/).



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