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Lawsuit Challenges Cuts to Library Services, Aims to Protect IMLS

# Lawsuit Challenges Cuts to Library Services, Aims to Protect IMLS

📅 April 8, 2025 ⌚ April 8, 2025 🌐 Editorial Staff

## The Facts -

- *Trump seeks to dismantle the IMLS, threatening libraries nationwide.*
- *ALA and AFSCME sue to block cuts to IMLS, citing legal obligations.*
- *Libraries are vital for democracy, providing access to essential resources.*

## Nationwide Library Services at Risk Amidst Independent Agency Funding Cuts

**Washington, D.C.** - A significant legal challenge has emerged against the Trump administration's decision to scale back the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an independent agency pivotal to supporting libraries and museums across the United States. The lawsuit, brought forward by the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), seeks to prevent the dismantling of

IMLS as per an executive order from the Trump administration. This action is pursued with legal representation from Democracy Forward and Gair Gallo Eberhard LLP. [The lawsuit](#) aims to overturn efforts to cut the agency's foundational programs.

ALA President Cindy Hohl emphasized the importance of libraries in maintaining democratic values: "Libraries play an important role in our democracy, from preserving history to providing access to government information, advancing literacy and civic engagement, and offering access to a variety of perspectives. These values are worth defending." She criticized actions perceived as threats to both democracy and community services.

The AFSCME, representing numerous cultural workers, has also voiced strong opposition. AFSCME President Lee Saunders stated, "Libraries and museums contain our collective history and knowledge, while also providing safe spaces for learning, cultural expression and access to critical public resources." He emphasized the numerous roles library workers fulfill, from aiding job seekers to providing essential care, and stressed the need to support rather than diminish these services.

As a federal body established in 1996, IMLS has consistently received bipartisan support and funding under different presidential administrations, including Clinton, George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump. The move to cut its programs, the complaint argues, could breach legal obligations by eliminating initiatives that Congress has mandated and funded. [Trump executive order](#).

According to Democracy Forward President Skye Perryman, "Reducing the IMLS workforce would undermine the agency's ability to faithfully execute its legal obligations, and harm the operations of libraries." The organization remains committed to defending libraries from detrimental policies.

Following the executive order, the ALA proactively communicated its concerns in [a letter to the new IMLS acting director](#), urging the protection of programs safeguarded by legislation.

Democracy Forward's advocacy extends into various states, including [Arkansas](#), [Florida](#), and [Alabama](#), where it actively challenges policies hindering library operations and access to books.

For those interested in delving deeper into the legal proceedings, the full complaint can be accessed [here](#).

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