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PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Attorney General Neronha today co-led a coalition of 20 attorneys general in suing the Trump administration to stop the dismantling of three federal agencies that provide services and funding supporting public libraries and museums, workers, and small 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. In addition, the labor organizing staff and programs of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) have been slashed, and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) has been forced to cut of its grant programs that support small business owners. The lawsuit filed by Attorney General Neronha and the coalition seeks to stop the targeted destruction of the IMLS and the two other agencies targeted in the administration’s EO that millions of Americans rely on, especially those in underserved communities.

“As the President and his Administration continue their attempts to dismantle the federal government, Americans would do well to consider their priorities,” said **Attorney General Neronha**. “What do these three agencies have in common? At first glance, maybe little. But if you take a closer look, you may realize that all three agencies empower everyday people in this country to access their full potential, whether it be through knowledge, workers’ rights, or small business support. By unlawfully attacking these agencies, they are attempting to stifle the American dream. We won’t let them, and neither should you.”

This Executive Order is the administration’s latest attempt to dismantle federal agencies in defiance of Congress. Attorney General Neronha and the coalition are seeking to stop the dismantling of three agencies targeted in the administration’s Executive Order:

1. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which supports museums and libraries nationwide through grantmaking, research, and policy development;
2. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), which promotes peaceful resolution of labor disputes.

3. The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), which promotes the growth and inclusion of minority-owned businesses through federal financial assistance programs; and

As Attorney General Neronha and the coalition assert in the lawsuit, dismantling these agencies will have devastating effects on communities throughout Rhode Island and the nation that rely on them to provide important services to the public.

In 2024, IMLS invested \$180 million in libraries nationwide under its Grants to States Program. The administration's action will threaten hundreds of library staff across the country that provide essential services to their communities. Rhode Island's Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) received nearly \$1.5 million from the Institute of Museum and Library Services in 2024. These funds support nearly 50% of OLIS's staff, programs, and services in Rhode Island.

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. Many of Rhode Island's collective bargaining agreements rely on mediation through FMCS. For example, as noted in court documents, DCYF and one of its unions used the services of FMCS just last year, avoiding a strike that could have compromised DCYF's ability to ensure stability and security for children in their care. Even where state workers are not involved, the inability to access FMCS services could have devastating impacts for access to critical services. For example, the Teamsters Local 251 represents nearly 5,000 members across the transportation and health care industries. The Teamsters have relied on access to FMCS to resolve disputes and avoid significant disruptions to our schools and to access to healthcare.

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 MBDA provides many valuable services to Rhode Island's small businesses, including one-on-one guidance and expertise on business strategies and resources. The MBDA also provides grants for incubators such as Rhode Island's Small Business HUB.

Attorney General Neronha 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.

Attorney General Neronha co-leads this lawsuit with Attorney General Letitia James of New York and Attorney General Anne Lopez of Hawaii. Joining the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

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