

# *Library Advocates Rally as Trump Targets Federal Funding*

An executive order has demanded that the Institute of Museum and Library Services be eliminated to the maximum extent allowed by law.



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Library supporters are rallying to the defense of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, warning that the Trump administration's efforts to pare back or even eliminate the agency will damage institutions across the country and potentially violate the law.

The independent agency, created in 1996, is the federal government's main source of support for the nation's libraries, museums and archives, with a budget of roughly \$290 million. Its largest program, totaling roughly \$160 million, goes directly to state library agencies.

The agency was one of seven named in a March 14 executive order titled "Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy," which ordered that they be "eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law." Last week, Keith E. Sonderling, the recently confirmed deputy secretary of labor, was sworn in as acting director, replacing Cyndee Landrum, a career library professional.

Mr. Sonderling visited the agency's office on Thursday with a small team, including at least one staff member of Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, who was given an office and access to the agency's computer systems, according to

an employee who was present. After leaving, Mr. Sonderling issued a statement promising to move the agency “in lock step with this administration to enhance and foster innovation.”

“We will revitalize I.M.L.S. and restore focus on patriotism, ensuring we preserve our country’s core values, promote American exceptionalism and cultivate love of country in future generations,” Mr. Sonderling said.

Even before the visit, more than a dozen library, museum and scholarly groups had issued statements expressing alarm at the March 14 order, which the American Library Association called “shortsighted” and an “assault.”