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California sues Trump administration after funding for critical library services threatened

What you need to know: As National Library Week begins, California is suing the Trump administration after millions of dollars in grants to the state's libraries were terminated abruptly when the federal administration illegally dismantled a federal agency.

Sacramento, California – As National Library Week begins, Governor Gavin Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta announced a lawsuit against the Trump administration after millions of dollars in grants to state libraries were terminated abruptly through the Trump administration's efforts to illegally shutter the agency that administers them. This threatens federal funding to California libraries that support library staff and critical library programs, including literacy and language tutoring and summer reading and activity programs.

In California, we know libraries hold more than books. Libraries, and librarians, stand at the crossroads of opportunity and information, offering countless programs and supports for everyone in the community, from career help to free meals for children. An attack on libraries is an attack on communities – and California is fighting back.

Governor Gavin Newsom

Across the country, libraries, the cornerstones of our communities, are under attack. Libraries are places where children learn, where families gather, where anyone, regardless of income or background, can access tools to learn and explore.

To threaten libraries is to strip communities of free resources and opportunity. In California, we're fighting to ensure everyone has access to the power and promise that libraries provide.

First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom

"Our libraries are hubs for learning, civic engagement, and community. They provide important services to Californians, from kids summer reading and meal programs, to programs that help families, seniors, and veterans navigate an increasingly digital world," **said Attorney General Rob Bonta**. "On Friday, we sued the Trump Administration for unlawfully attempting to shutter the Institute of Museum and Library Services—a federal agency that supports libraries across the nation. This National Library Week, we recognize the essential role that libraries play in our communities and to preserve our rich cultural heritage, and vow to continue the fight to ensure that all Californians can access the public services libraries provide our communities every day."

Executive Order No. 14238 continues the Trump administration's unlawful attack on several Congressionally-established agencies, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which supports educational and cultural institutions and programs across the country. Through IMLS's Grants to States Program, the California State Library received \$15.7 million

in federal funding to support statewide library programs and staffing – less than 40 cents per Californian. Over 21 percent of that funding has yet to be sent to California.

IMLS funds support numerous programs that serve all Californians – especially lower-income families, seniors, and veterans. These funds also help expand access to the Career Online High School program that enables adults to earn their high school diplomas through local libraries, and the Braille and Talking Book Library that ensures that visually impaired Californians have free access to books in accessible formats. If the Order stands, all functions and staff positions paid for with IMLS funding will be at risk.

Attorney General Bonta joined the lawsuit alongside the attorneys general of New York, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

This is California’s 12th lawsuit against the Trump administration. A copy of the lawsuit is available here.

More on California’s State Library

With IMLS funding, the State Library works with the 1,127 libraries across the state to provide high-quality literacy and summer programs, high-speed broadband, disaster preparedness, early learning, homework help, teen services, career resources, and collections. It supports transparency, providing free and open access to government information through the Federal and State Depository Library Programs. The State Library also maintains and expands the Braille and Talking Book Library, providing audio and braille books, magazines, and descriptive videos to blind and print disabled Californians.

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