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Librarians aren't being quiet when it comes to the Trump administration's funding cuts

The American Library Association filed a lawsuit in response to President Donald Trump's executive order that targeted seven federal agencies, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Photo by: Scripps News



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National Library Week is an annual celebration intended to underline the valuable role that libraries play in communities. But this year, it feels like librarians are spending less time highlighting why they exist and more time fighting to exist.

On one webpage, you'll see the American Library Association (ALA) announcing this year's celebration week theme is "Drawn to the Library," — and on another page, the nonprofit said it has [drawn up a lawsuit](#) against the Trump administration to challenge the recent dismantling of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, considered the largest union representing museum and library workers, also joined the lawsuit that was filed earlier this week in Washington.

This lawsuit is in response to President Donald Trump's signing of an executive order on March 14, [titled "Continuing The Reduction Of The Federal Bureaucracy,"](#) that targeted seven federal agencies, including the IMLS.

The order did not explicitly eliminate those agencies, but what it did do, according to the lawsuit, was dismiss most of the IMLS staff, fire its entire board and pull grants that over 17,000 state library systems rely on for part of their funding.

According to the ALA's lawsuit, the agency is the only federal entity dedicated to library funds. While it is not the sole source of funding for libraries in the U.S., it is used in many different ways — from basic purchasing of library tools like computers and actual books to helping pilot educational programs.

The ALA said Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency gutted the IMLS without Congressional authorization, which would be illegal, and that it has already caused "irreparable harm."



libraries and the restoration of the IMLS.

“Libraries are not optional—they’re essential,” [Penguin Random House said on its social media pages](#). “As publishers, we are unwavering in our support for libraries, which play a critical role in our communities and our shared commitment to a literate, informed society and democracy.”

[In the letter, the group of publishers wrote](#), “Libraries are welcoming, safe spaces for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to gather, learn, and grow. Through IMLS grants, libraries have expanded their essential educational programs, including summer reading initiatives for children, career development training, family story hours, and community health workshops. These offerings foster well-being, combat isolation, and empower citizens to take control of their health.”

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A quick search of TikTok or any platform will lead you to videos from authors, independent bookstores and more voicing their concerns over the IMLS cuts and pointing at bigger concerns of censorship.

In the ALA’s “State of America’s Libraries” report, president Emily Drabinski wrote, “These are not ordinary times,” and, “the unprecedented wave of organized censorship intensifies, particularly in our public libraries.”

The worries aren’t far-fetched considering other federal agencies like the Department of Defense have banned hundreds of books in its educational centers that focus on anything related to diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI.

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