

April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the nation's 17,500 museums, serving the public in nearly every congressional district across the country, the **American Association of Museums**, a national co-sponsor of the 2008 Arts Advocacy Day, urges you to increase federal support for the arts and culture:

- **Promote life-long learning** by approving a \$15 million increase for grants to museums within the budget of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the FY 2009 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.
- **Support public access to America's cultural heritage** with increased funding for the federal cultural agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities in the FY 2009 Interior appropriations bill.
- **Encourage increased citizen contributions to the arts and culture**, permanently passing tax legislation that enables individuals to roll over their IRA funds to charities without penalty and permitting artists to take a fair-market deduction for contributions of their own work to museums.

Museums in every Congressional district:

- Promote travel and tourism, foster local economic development and employ constituents
- Revitalize aging downtowns with signature buildings
- Attract dynamic relocating businesses and families
- Provide local artists and scientists with venues to create and present original work and conduct exciting research
- Devote more than **18 million instructional hours** to students of all ages, regularly bringing traveling exhibits to local schools and hosting interactive school field trips
- Include every type of institution, from arboretums to zoos, from presidential libraries to children's museums, from historic houses to science and technology centers

Museums in the 21st century continue to be centers for learning and stewards of our nation's heritage. The public overwhelmingly trusts our nation's museums. We are committed to serving the needs and interests of 21st century citizens in communities large and small, rural and urban.

With your support, museums will continue to strive for excellence in all aspects of their operations, from education programs and public exhibitions to good governance and collections care and research. Federal resources are critical to this great work. I have countless stories from dedicated museum professionals of the creative and meaningful ways they serve the public, but also the desperate need for resources to sustain their good work.

The long-standing commitment of bipartisan federal support for museums and cultural agencies serving our citizens and visitors is irreplaceable – and has never been more critical. Museums across the country thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Ford Bell, DVM
President