

Libraries nationwide are facing a serious threat due to a March 14 executive order that cuts funding to the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federally mandated agency that supports libraries and museums in every U.S. state.

Hancock County, known for its strong community support for libraries, is home to 22 libraries that serve nearly 38,000 registered users from every background. Most recent statistics report patrons visited local libraries more than 350,000 times in 2023. While our county benefits from a robust range of library services, it still relies on essential resources provided by IMLS through the Maine State Library. These services include interlibrary loans, internet access, and digital content like eBooks, eAudiobooks, and research tools from state databases such as Ancestry.com. However, these services are now in jeopardy since the Trump administration halted IMLS operations.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Senator Collins, Senator King, Representative Golden and Attorney General Aaron Frey for their unwavering support of Maine's libraries, especially in light of the challenges posed by the defunding of IMLS.

We also appreciate our patrons, Friends, and board members for their ongoing advocacy in support of library services for everyone. Along with your help, we can protect libraries as vital community hubs that offer access to essential resources, education, and support for residents across Maine.

We urge all Mainers to contact their congressional representatives and stand up for libraries. Eliminating and defunding IMLS would disproportionately harm small and rural communities, deepening inequities and removing crucial services that many depend on daily. Living in one of the most rural states, Maine residents are especially vulnerable to statewide service cuts.

Thank you. It is our honor to serve you.

Signed,

Nick Berry, Witherle Memorial Library

Rich Boulet, Blue Hill Public Library

Stephanie Carter, Brooksville Free Public Library

Matt DeLaney, Jesup Memorial Library

Bob Delsandro, Bass Harbor Memorial Library

Lisa Ladd, Buck Memorial Library

Sarah Lesko, Ellsworth Public Library

Ruth Mapleton, Dorcas Library and Winter Harbor Public Library

Megan Clark McDaniel, Somesville Library Association

Catherine Nevin, Friend Memorial Public Library

Erich Reed, Southwest Harbor Public Library

Christopher Ross, Stonington Public Library

Amy Wisehart, Northeast Harbor Library