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The Vermont Consortium of Academic Libraries Opposes Federal Budget Proposal

Like others in the library community, the Vermont Consortium of Academic Libraries (VCAL) is dismayed at the draconian budgetary cuts proposed in President Trump's FY2018 budget. The specific proposals to eliminate funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) would have a devastating effect on small communities in a rural state such as Vermont, communities that rely heavily on federal support to keep the doors of their libraries open to the public.

Past library programs funded by the NEH include the Bridging Cultures Bookshelf, a carefully curated, scholarly collection of books and films representing diverse perspectives on Muslim culture in the United States and around the world, and the National Digital Newspaper Program, a partnership between the Library of Congress and the NEH to develop an Internet-based, searchable database of U.S. newspapers. Here in Vermont, the University of Vermont received funding in the years 2010, 2012, and 2014 to participate in digitizing some of Vermont's most at-risk historical newspapers.

Over the past 5 years (2012-2016), the IMLS has funded almost \$3 million worth of projects in Vermont alone, providing crucial support for museums, research and interlibrary loan services for libraries, instructional programs aimed at creating more effective librarians and teachers in order to support STEM educational efforts, and science learning projects dedicated to introducing young children to scientific concepts. Libraries play an essential role in the life of American communities, supporting our treasured freedoms while fostering a love of learning and an inventive and independent spirit. They assist job-seekers and job-changers in developing or improving their skills to adapt to today's rapidly changing economy, while providing a safe environment for children and teens working hard to become America's future leaders.

The United States' intellectual and creative institutions have been among our most effective forces for good across the world, and we strongly urge our Congressional leaders to reject these budget recommendations out of hand.

For more information, please contact:

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Member libraries: Bennington College, Castleton University, Champlain College, College of Saint Joseph, Community College of Vermont/Vermont Technical College, Goddard College, Green Mountain College, Johnson State College, Landmark College, Lyndon State College, Marlboro College, Middlebury College, Northeastern Baptist College, Norwich University, Saint Michael's College, SIT/World Learning, Southern Vermont College, Sterling College, University of Vermont, Vermont Law School.