

Dear Senator Sanders, Senator Welch, and Representative Balint:

We are writing to you on behalf of the South Burlington Public Library Board of Trustees to express our deep concern about proposed federal budget cuts that threaten the future of public libraries here in Vermont.

In South Burlington, we have a beautiful, welcoming public library because of the tireless support of our citizens. The Library prides itself in its mission statement on strengthening our community through abundant resources.

For example, our residents have access to materials from libraries throughout the state and beyond through interlibrary loan (ILL). We also offer the ABLE library (audio, braille, large print and electronic books) at no cost to patrons of all ages who are blind, visually impaired, or have reading disabilities (<https://able.vermont.gov/>). And residents only need a library card to find online instruction and information on a huge range of topics, like car repair, test prep, nutrition, coding, starting a business, and how to talk to others who hold opposing viewpoints (<https://vtonlinelib.org/>). These essential services support education, employment, and community well-being.

However, these services are now under threat. The President's Executive Order issued on March 14 proposes drastic cuts to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the agency that provides crucial federal funding for libraries across the country. If implemented, this order would cripple the ability of our library - and all of Vermont's libraries - to serve our residents.

The Vermont Department of Libraries stands to lose roughly one-third of its funding if these cuts are made. All but two full-time employees of the Vermont Department of Libraries receive federal funds for their salaries. Without qualified staff to run the programs, many resources, such as the ILL and ABLE, will be inaccessible. Support, training, and certification from VDOL for Vermont library staff may also disappear.

These services enable South Burlington residents to access information and materials far beyond the reach of a single public library. ILL is the most effective and efficient use of federal funds because it extends lending possibilities. Without the statewide ABLE Library, the South Burlington Public Library cannot provide full library access to local residents with disabilities. And removing access to Gale Research may leave residents without these plentiful online resources, both during and after library hours.

These losses to our state libraries are not inevitable. We urge you to reject any budget that includes cuts to IMLS or otherwise undermines the critical mission of our nation's libraries. Protecting federal library funding is not just a matter of budget priorities. It is a commitment to the democratic values of access, opportunity, and knowledge for all.

Thank you for your time and your continued support of Vermonters and our libraries.

Sincerely,  
Stacey Pape, Chair, and the South Burlington Public Library Board of Trustees

Dear editor:

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These losses to our state libraries are not inevitable. Please urge Vermont's congressional delegation to reject any budget that includes cuts to IMLS or otherwise undermines the critical mission of our nation's libraries.

Senator Welch - (202) 224-4242 (<https://www.welch.senate.gov/>)

Senator Sanders - (202) 224-5141 (<https://www.sanders.senate.gov/>)

Representative Balint - (202) 225-4115 (<https://balint.house.gov/>)

Keep up with the issues facing libraries at the American Library Association's website (<https://www.ala.org/>) and sign up for news updates at Every Library (<https://www.everylibrary.org/>).

Protecting federal library funding is not just a matter of budget priorities. It is a commitment to the democratic values of access, opportunity, and knowledge for all.

Thank you for supporting your local library.

Sincerely,

Stacey Pape, Chair, and the South Burlington Public Library Board of Trustees