



DRAFT BUDGET SIGN ON LETTER
S1676-A (LITTLE)

February 13, 2018

Honorable Robert G. Ortt
New York State Senate
175 Walnut Street, Suite 6
Lockport, NY 14094

Dear Senator Ortt:

We respectfully request the New York State Senate to provide \$5 million in the SFY 2018-19 budget to establish a pilot competitive grant program to support museum education programs in cultural institutions across the state as part of S.1676-A, the Museum Education Act (MEA), which is sponsored by Senator Betty Little.

Over 1,500 New York museums, historical societies, zoos, botanical gardens, aquaria and cultural arts institutions provide instruction to over six million schoolchildren but they receive no direct state support to initiate, expand or enhance educational services through access to museum collections, scholarship and virtual learning.

This legislation and funding would provide eligible cultural institutions with collections access to grant funding to conduct curriculum-based educational programs for students and teachers in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve as well as adults enrolled in continuing education programs and funding to transport students to those sites. Students living in low-income communities whether in an urban, suburban or rural setting benefit from having access to these programs.

The MEA will help to strengthen the educational competitiveness of New York's students and adult learners by ensuring that cultural institutions, in collaboration with teachers and schools, adapt and integrate the state's history, art and cultural resources held in the public trust by New York's museum community into statewide efforts to improve student performance and access to knowledge.

For its role in advancing equity in the education of New York's children, the New York State Board of Regents has designated the MEA a budget priority this year.

Sincerely,

Herbert H. Schmidt III
Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village
Amherst, NY
www.BNHV.org