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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WISCONSIN PUBLIC LIBRARIES INVITE PATRONS TO SPEAK UP FOR FEDERAL LIBRARY FUNDING WITH POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

(MILWAUKEE, WI) – Public libraries across Wisconsin are joining together to help library users make their voices heard in support of continued federal library funding. Patrons are invited to visit their local library to write a postcard to their U.S. Senators and Representatives, sharing why libraries are important to them, their families, and their communities.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the only source of federal funding for libraries and museums nationwide. IMLS grants support critical services, especially in small, rural, and tribal communities, including broadband access, workforce development, early literacy, and technology resources. IMLS was last renewed in 2018 with overwhelming bipartisan support, passing by unanimous consent in the Senate and by a vote of 331 to 28 in the House. In 2024, IMLS's \$294 million budget represented roughly 0.0046% of the overall federal budget—about 75¢ per taxpayer. Now that funding is in jeopardy, with the planned elimination of the IMLS agency; the Congressional vote for renewal takes place in September.

“These postcards are a simple but powerful way for our community members to share how their library makes a difference in their lives,” said Steve Heser, Director of Milwaukee County Federated Library System. “Libraries are essential—and this is a chance to help protect them.”

Library patrons and residents can find free postcards at most public libraries across the state. Participants can stop into a public library, write one or more postcards, and leave them at the library to be mailed to Washington D.C.—along with other postcards from across Wisconsin—amplifying the message to U.S. senators and representatives that libraries matter.

“We have already seen a great response from library supporters speaking up on these postcards,” said Brittany Larson, Director of Bridges Library System. “Please, keep them coming—every story matters. Your story matters because each library story is unique and important. Share yours today!”

The postcard campaign runs through Friday, July 25. For more information about the statewide public library postcard campaign and ways you can support libraries, visit www.MyWisconsinLibrary.org or stop into your public library.

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