

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Organized 1884

Incorporated by the Congress 1889

June 25, 2015

To:

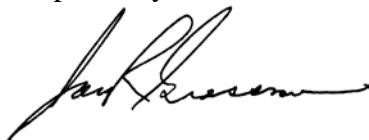
The Honorable Bruce Rauner Governor, State of Illinois
The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker, Illinois House of Representatives
The Honorable John Cullerton, President, Illinois Senate

On behalf of the American Historical Association, the largest professional organization in the United States devoted to the discipline of history, I must express deep concern for the plan to close Illinois State Museum facilities. This institution has been in operation for 138 years, giving generations of Illinoisans and visitors an important perspective on their heritage and providing a venue for ongoing debate and expression.

The professionals who staff the Illinois State Museum perform invaluable roles of preserving the state's history and culture and educating residents and visitors. Their current, on-going work within the museum and at sites throughout the state will be in jeopardy with the sudden closure being considered. Defunding the ISM risks derailing decades of work, including the museum's national accreditation (a superior credential obtained by only 5 percent of museums in the nation), while offering little financial savings. State museums are vital cultural resources that connect citizens to their past and foster historical thinking skills that benefit the community. Losing the state museum would not only hamper Illinois' tourism industry, but also leave a hole in the state's civic education.

The American Historical Association is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1884 and incorporated by the United States Congress in 1889 for the promotion of historical studies and the dissemination of historical research. As a disciplinary association representing 14,000 historians working in museums, colleges, and schools throughout the country, we stand with historians in Illinois to share our unease at the threatened closure of the Illinois State Museum as a supposed response to budgetary concerns. We hope you and other members of the Illinois state government reconsider these actions and the long-term impact they will have on your state.

Respectfully,



Jim Grossman
Executive Director
American Historical Association