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November 30, 2007

The Honorable Eliot Spitzer
Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Spitzer:

Just over a year ago, at its September 2006 meeting, the New York Board of Regents voted to move forward with legislation that would amend the education law and the arts and cultural affairs law to provide formula funding to chartered museums and historical societies that offer verifiable standards-based educational programming to school children and teachers in grades kindergarten through twelve. This legislation, the Museum and Cultural Education Act, is pivotal to bringing museums and other cultural institutions together with schools to provide quality educational programming to children throughout the state. The Regents recently affirmed the MCEA as a reform priority.

The trustees of the New York State Historical Association firmly believe—and have heard through countless academic studies and personal testimonials alike—that museums inspire, educate, entertain, and excite students. It is through experiences like those at our museum that students learn the type of critical thinking skills to prepare them for life beyond the classroom. Students must learn how to access, analyze, and interpret information to be successful in the continually growing global economy.

Unfortunately, these types of experiences come with a price. Museums are committed to providing quality, standards-based educational programs to children throughout the state, but they cannot do this without financial support. They have begun the process alone, but must have your support to continue with their work. A modest amount of money within the state budget will allow hundreds of museums (and millions of children) to benefit.

I urge you to support the Museum and Cultural Education Act and enable museums to expand their ability to provide curriculum-based programming essential to the education of our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

Thomas Putnam

Trustee

New York State Historical Association

Cc: Manuel Rivera, Paul Francis