



June 21, 2018

**For Immediate Release
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**The Museum Association of New York Applauds the New York State Legislature
for Passing the Museum Education Act**

Troy, NY — The Museum Association of New York (MANY), New York’s only statewide membership association representing museums, historical societies, zoos, botanical gardens, and aquariums, applauds the New York State Assembly for passing the A.3892A, the Museum Education Act (MEA). This bill, sponsored in the New York State Assembly by Matthew Titone (D, Staten Island), was passed by the State Senate in April (S.1676A) through the tireless efforts of its long-time champion and sponsor Betty Little (R, Queensbury). The bill now heads to the Governor’s desk where his signature would make it law.

“I am very proud to have sponsored the Museum Education Act and to see it pass both houses after many years of hard work.” Titone said. “Arts, culture, and education have always been priorities of mine, and this legislation helps foster them in a mutually supportive way to greatly benefit New York State’s children and students of all ages. We have over 1,500 museums, historical societies, zoos, botanical gardens, and cultural arts institutions, and they are underutilized by our educational system. The Museum Education Act fills this gap by providing state support to educational services by these institutions in a statewide effort that will improve student performance and access to knowledge.”

“There is so much students can learn beyond the walls of their schools,” said Senator Betty Little. “Throughout our state, we have incredible museums, zoos, aquariums, and art galleries. ‘Hands-on’ is great way to learn but often not possible in the classroom. A curriculum-based connection between schools and our museums will engage more students in a meaningful and memorable way.”

The MEA directs the Commissioner of Education to establish and implement a program that will provide access to competitive funding for curriculum-based educational programming, including transportation of students to museums or museum staff to school classrooms and the production of exhibitions directly linked to state education standards.

“We are thrilled that the Assembly and Senate have passed the Museum Education Act as we work to expand access to education programs at museums in New York,” said

State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. “When funded, this bill will provide much-needed support to our world-class cultural institutions to improve programs for students and develop curricular aids for teachers that incorporate museums’ incredible collections and exhibitions. We look forward to working with our partners in the Legislature and Executive Branch to identify the funding so students can enjoy the unique learning experiences at New York’s museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and arts institutions.”

MANY Executive Director Erika Sanger explained that the MEA creates a mechanism to distribute critically needed program funds to New York’s cultural organizations who steward the state’s heritage regardless of budget size, geographic location, or content area. “The MEA has the potential to significantly improve the way that museums work with their communities,” Sanger said.

The MEA will 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. Recent studies confirm that students living in low-income communities - whether in an urban, suburban, or rural setting - especially benefit from access to these programs. “Fair and equal access to museums and their programs will enhance learning for everyone,” Sanger said.

For its role in advancing equity in the education of New York’s children, the New York State Board of Regents designated the MEA a budget priority for them this year. “I’m so pleased that the Museum Education Act has passed in the Assembly and Senate,” said Regent Roger Tilles, Chair of the Regents Committee on Cultural Education. “New York State has some of the best museums and cultural organizations in the world. It’s so important for our students to visit these institutions and experience learning about history, science, and the arts through museum collections and programs.”

Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa said the Board was pleased to learn that the Assembly and Senate passed the MEA. “Museums and cultural institutions engage and educate students in unique ways through artifacts, exhibitions, and educational programs,” said Rosa. “This bill is another step towards advancing equity in our education system so students in low-income communities can have greater access to the remarkable learning opportunities at cultural institutions.”

MANY extends a special thank you to all of their members who worked with their state legislators and those who played key roles in getting the bill passed in their respective houses: Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, State Senator Rich Funke, the chair of the Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation Committee and Assembly Member Danny O’Donnell, the chair of Tourism, Arts & Sports Committee, State Senator Carl Marcellino, chair of the Senate Education Committee, and Assembly Member Cathy Nolan, chair of the Assembly Education Committee.

Links to the passed legislation can be found at: <https://nysmuseums.org/Museum-Education-Act>

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