



Funding for the New York Cultural Education Center

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and/or a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I write to you asking that the final budget agreement contain an additional \$17 million in funding for the New York Cultural Education Center (CEC) so that it can continue the important work of the State Museum, State Library and State Archives.

This additional funding can be raised in many ways, including by increasing the county-based deed recording fee by \$10 to ensure these facilities are able to safeguard our state's heritage and educate future generations about the Great State of New York. The recording fee, which serves as one of the current funding sources for CEC, has not changed in more than 20 years. Since inflation continues to eat away at the value of the standard statutory fee, the CEC has been working with fewer and fewer resources each year.

Prior to the 2022-23 state budget, the CEC had not seen an increase in state support in a decade, despite an increase in inflation exceeding 60% over that timeframe. The increase allocated since 2022-23 represents just 3% of the operating budget for the CEC, which does not even meet the contractual increases of the workforce, let alone address the years of disrepair and neglect at the CEC and the New York State Museum. The Museum, which was established in 1836 and is the oldest and largest state museum in the nation, has been the subject of recent news articles lamenting the condition of what should be a jewel of the state complex in downtown Albany.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house to include \$17 million in additional funding for the Cultural Education Center in the final budget this year. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
