

History museums and libraries are actively being defunded for “rewriting history.” The current president wrote on the White House website, “Under this historical revision, our Nation’s unparalleled legacy of advancing liberty, individual rights, and human happiness is reconstructed as inherently racist, sexist, oppressive, or otherwise irredeemably flawed.” The current administration clearly wants to erase parts of history that show colonizers in a negative light. As a strategy to combat any ideology that suggests the foundation of America stemmed from intolerance and irredeemable actions, the Trump administration has ceased federal funding earned through grants to museums, libraries, state humanities councils, historic sites, and archives. This was done through executive order, “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History” released in March 2025, stating that the Institute of Museum and Library Services would be reduced as much as the law would allow. The programs defunded (such as the Laura Bush Library Program which trains librarians and archivists) directly affect the likelihood of having a stable career in public history. The Smithsonian has fallen victim to threats of losing funding in response to its “woke ideology.” JD Vance was put in charge of removing “improper ideology” from all sections of the Smithsonian, specifically targeting the American Women’s History Museum and any exhibit that “divides America by race.” The Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie Bunch, responded to the executive order saying, “the Smithsonian will remain committed to telling the multi-faceted stories of this country’s extraordinary heritage.” Although historians are working to combat political pressures, the telling of American history is at risk of being altered. This executive order shows the intent to defund and control museums and libraries putting jobs at risk. At its core, public history is connecting the past to people in the present by educating and working with all communities. The attack on museums and libraries will cost the United States jobs as well as an accurate education that encompasses all historical perspectives.



A collection of protest signs meant to preserve history- New York Times

Sources:  
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