

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

We appreciate your past support for providing funding increases for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and urge you to continue this trend in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. With these increases, we are closer to realizing the changes made to the program in the bipartisan reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act, which now require an infusion of \$9 million to fully implement.

During the ongoing pandemic, libraries continue to serve as a vital source of trusted information, especially regarding COVID-19. Many libraries are helping seniors and other at-risk residents register for vaccines. Libraries are offering one-stop access to local, state, and federal public health resources, career and employment services, and homework help, as well as providing hotspots, tablets, and related assistance to students and seniors who lack Internet access at home.

This is par for the course for libraries, which have always played a vital role in our communities, offering free access to essential information on a wide range of topics, skills and career training, and computing services. According to an American Library Association (ALA) survey, nearly 100 percent of public libraries reported offering free Internet access. In rural areas, more than 83 percent of libraries reported serving as their community's only provider of free Internet and computing services. At a time when applications for many jobs and government services must be filled out online, 90 percent of public libraries offer technology training, and 76 percent help people navigate e-government resources.

Libraries, however, provide more than just Internet access. According to another ALA report, more than 92 percent of public libraries offer services that help patrons prepare resumes and conduct job searches. Libraries help entrepreneurs innovate with 3-D printers and makerspaces, and create business plans and growth strategies through access to specialized collections for small businesses. They also provide tailored assistance to help individuals, such as veterans, access earned benefits and acquire the tools to re-integrate back into civilian life.

Moreover, libraries expose children to books and information to help them gain and enhance their literacy skills. Numerous surveys show that many of our nation's children living

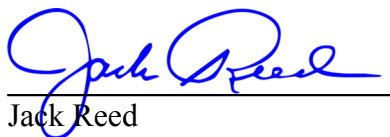
in poverty have very limited access to books at home. These children depend on their local libraries' story-time and summer reading programs to help them prepare to learn in school and succeed.

Unfortunately, during this time of increased demand, which has been exacerbated by COVID-19, many libraries continue to face cuts and severe budget pressures, leading to closures, reduced hours, and staff reductions. LSTA is the only federal program that helps public libraries meet community needs, provide enhanced services through technology, reach underserved populations, and retain librarians while recruiting new and diverse entrants into this important field. Consisting of a state formula program, which is amplified by a state match and competitive grants, LSTA is more essential now than ever. In the 2018 reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act, Congress strengthened LSTA to support data driven tools to tailor services to address and meet community needs, help libraries prepare for and provide services after a disaster or emergency, enhance services for Native Americans, and recruit and train library and information science professionals from a broad range of backgrounds. The new law also enables increases in the Grants to States program to be shared more broadly across states, while ensuring that no state loses funding.

We greatly appreciate the strong support for LSTA provided by this Subcommittee in recent years, including the \$197.4 million appropriated in FY 2021. Increasing funding for LSTA, especially by providing a boost of \$9 million for the Grants to States program, will help ensure that Americans of all ages have access to libraries, Internet, and information services; the resources they need to develop literacy skills and achieve academically; and the tools to search for, find, and create jobs. We appreciate the supplemental funding that has been provided through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan, and encourage the Subcommittee to continue to address the ongoing needs of libraries through increasing regular annual funding.

Thank you for your attention to this request and your continued support in sustaining and strengthening our nation's libraries.

Sincerely,



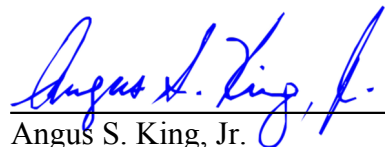
Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Susan M. Collins

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



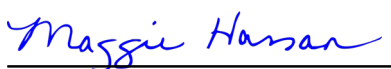
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



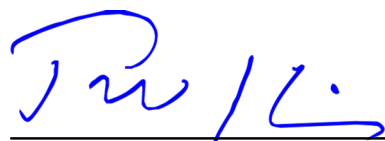
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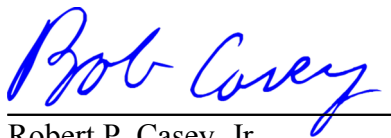
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



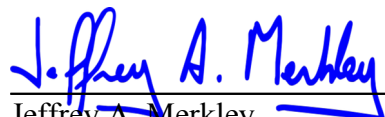
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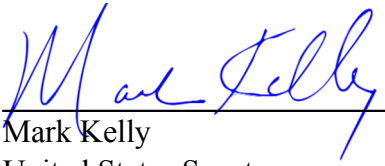
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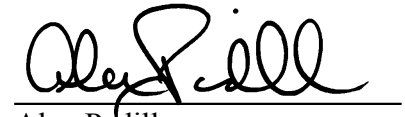


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United States Senator

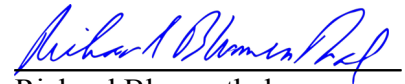



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United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator


Alex Padilla
United States Senator

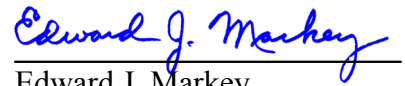

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Richard Blumenthal
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Debbie Stabenow
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Benjamin L. Cardin
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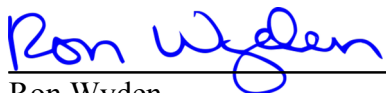
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Amy Klobuchar
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Christopher A. Coons
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Ron Wyden
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Chris Van Hollen
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Christopher S. Murphy
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Tammy Duckworth
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Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



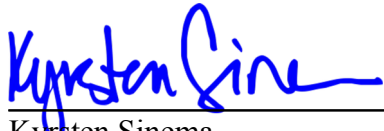
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

/s/ Brian Schatz

Brian Schatz
United States Senator



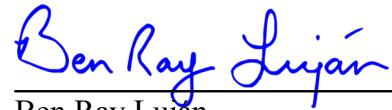
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United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator