

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

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

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

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to thank you for your strong support of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and to request that you provide at least \$189.3 million, the same level as current funding, in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Libraries serve 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. Every day, libraries across the country provide no-fee public access to computers and the Internet in some of our most distressed communities. According to an American Library Association (ALA) survey, 100 percent of public libraries reported offering free Internet access. In rural areas, more than 83 percent of libraries report they serve 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 use 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 such as services to veterans to help them acquire the tools to reintegrate 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, many libraries are facing cuts and severe budget pressures, leading to closures and reduced hours. 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 entrants to 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.

We greatly appreciate the strong support for LSTA provided by this Subcommittee in recent years. Providing at least the current funding level of more than \$189 million for FY 2019 and prioritizing funding increases 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 services and tools to search for, find, and create jobs.

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

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Susan M. Collins

Liz Cheney

Tammy Duckworth

Tom Harkin

Beahm

Maria Cantwell

Jeanne Shaheen

Tom Udall

Whitman

Rohit Verma

Mazie Hironaka

Joe Donnelly

Brian Schatz

Bill Nelson

Ahmed Brown

Duck Dub

Tommy Baddie

Richard Blumenthal

Rebbie Stetson

Heidi Heitkamp

Jeffrey A. Markley

Jon Tester

Tim Smitz

Elizabeth Warren

Maggie Hironaka

Dianne Feinstein

Amy Klobuchar

Michelle Obama

Paul Manafort

Leslie V. Halloran

Donald Trump

Eric M...

August King

Kirsten Lillibrand

Bob Carey, Jr.

Allyson

Frank

Cheri Coen

Mick F. B...

Bob Sanders

Don Wyder

Edward J. Markey

Mark R. Warner

Robert C. M...

J. B.

FY19 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding

Read each pair from the top of the letter from left to right

Reed
Collins

Peters
Duckworth

Carper
Cardin

Cantwell
Shaheen

Udall
Whitehouse

Menendez
Hirono

Donnelly
Schatz

Nelson
Brown

Durbin
Baldwin

Blumenthal
Stabenow

Heitkamp
Merkley

Tester
Smith

Warren
Hassan

Feinstein
Klobuchar

Heinrich
Manchin

Van Hollen
Harris

Murphy
King

Gillibrand
Casey

Jones
Kaine

Coons
Bennet

Sanders
Wyden

Markey
Warner

Cortez Masto
Booker