

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide increased funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

Libraries play a vital role in our communities, offering access for all to essential information on a wide range of topics, skills and career training, broadband, and computing services. According to a national survey (2022), nearly 100 percent of public libraries reported offering free Internet access. According to American Libraries, more than 83 percent of libraries in rural areas reported serving as their community's only provider of no-fee Internet and computing services ([The Last Mile](#), American Libraries, 2022). Over 90 percent of public libraries offer technology training, and 76 percent assist navigating digital government resources.

Increasingly, libraries have become centers for employment and business development services. Veterans transitioning into civilian life are turning to their local library for services such as completion of education and job training skills, resume building, job application, and access to earned veteran and family benefits. At a time when many job applications must be completed online, nearly all public libraries offer services which help patrons prepare resumes and conduct job searches, according to a [2019 report](#). For small businesses and entrepreneurs, many libraries offer 3-D printers and makerspaces to help designers innovate and provide access to specialized databases and collections.

The building blocks of language and literacy form in the first three years of a child's life. In their first year, a child's brain doubles in size, and by age 3, a child's brain is twice as active as an adult's. Developing these skills makes it easier for children to learn to read in school according to a [Maine State Library Report](#). More than 80 percent of children from economically disadvantaged communities lose reading skills over the summer because they lack access to books, learning resources, and enrichment opportunities such as trips to the library, bookstore, or museum, according to a [Reading Is Fundamental](#) 2022 report. Solving the literacy crisis requires creative collaboration among various stakeholders—and libraries have a crucial role to play.

LSTA grants enable libraries to develop services in every community throughout the nation, including people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, individuals with disabilities, residents of rural and urban areas, Native Americans, military families,

veterans, and caregivers. LSTA supports those who have difficulty in using a library through grants that support library services for the blind and physically handicapped through the use of assistive technology and accessible reading materials. For those who are blind or whose physical abilities limit their use of traditional print material, LSTA is a lifeline and connects them to a modern society.

We greatly appreciate the strong support for LSTA, administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, provided by this Subcommittee in recent years, including \$211.0 million in FY 2024. Increasing funding for LSTA in FY 2025 will help ensure that Americans of all ages have access to Internet, information services, academic and employment resources, and innovative services that meet community needs at public libraries (LSTA was reauthorized at \$232 million in 2018).

Thank you for your attention to this request and your continued support in sustaining and strengthening our nation's libraries and the innovative solutions they provide to communities across the nation.

Sincerely,



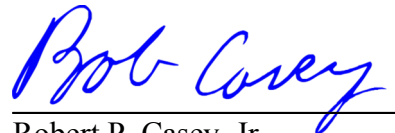
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Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



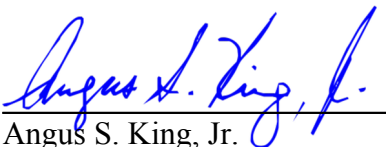
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



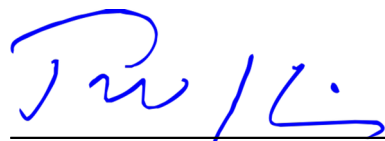
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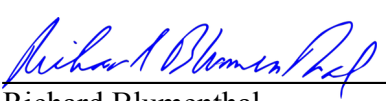
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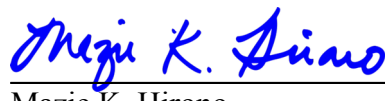
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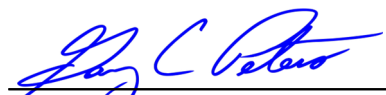
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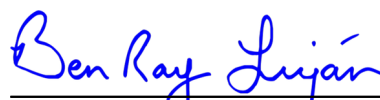
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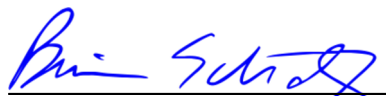
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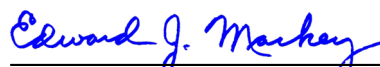
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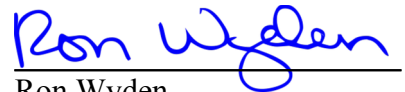
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