

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
House Appropriations Committee
2448 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
House Appropriations Committee
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write in support of the level funding of \$184.704 million for the **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)** in the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for the fiscal year 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. LSTA, which was reauthorized in December, 2010 has received deep cuts in the last two fiscal years and further cuts to this program would hurt many libraries in the United States and prevent them from providing essential services in every community. President Obama in his FY 2013 budget request also proposed level funding LSTA at \$184.704 million.

Two-thirds of our nation's public libraries report that they provide the only free access to computers and the Internet in their communities, but libraries provide more than access. Within the last three years, libraries have witnessed significant increases in usage to the areas of support they offer to the public – the greatest increases of services have been in helping patrons complete online job applications, create resumes, and access job databases and searches.

Unfortunately, during this time of increased demand for libraries, library budgets all across the country are being drastically cut. This culture of rising demand and lowering budgets has created a “perfect storm” for America's libraries. Congress needs to lead the efforts to ensure our nation's libraries have the funding they need to continue helping Americans find jobs by not cutting any funds for LSTA in the FY2013 Appropriations Bill.

Libraries serve a unique and important role in providing users with free access to all types of information and telecommunications services. The demand for such services has increased significantly with growing need for access to digital and online information – including e-government services, continuing education and employment opportunities. Many individuals have not been employed in some time, and libraries provide much needed guidance and encouragement to patrons as they search for jobs. Often, their current job skills are not adequate for the challenges of a 21st century economy and the library offers skills training in a safe environment.

For many small businesses, the library provides research resources and specially trained staff they could not otherwise afford. In a growing number of communities, libraries are opening business branches offering specialized collections which provide business-specific training in discerning credible research, studies, grant opportunities as well as assisting with business development initiatives.

Federal support for libraries encourages improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness of library services, enhances shared public access to information, promotes the use of technology, encourages the sharing of resources, and results in other collaborations and outreach not feasible across local and state boundaries.


While Internet use has increased substantially in the United States, nearly half of all American households still do not have computers or Internet access. In 2010 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a study compiled by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) titled "*Broadband Adoption in Low-Income Communities*" that studied what barriers blocked broadband access to low-income areas. This study also found that libraries play an important role in filling the gap between low home adoption and the high community demand for broadband. The study suggested that the cost-shifting happening with e-government services and access requirements need to be met with additional funding.

Every day, libraries across the country are providing no-fee public access to computers and the Internet in some of our most distressed communities. According to a recent report released by the American Library Association titled, "*Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study 2010-2011*," 65 percent of all libraries nationwide report they are the only provider of free Internet access in their communities. In rural areas, the role of the public library is even more critical as 73 percent of libraries are the only free Internet provider.

LSTA provides critical funding for libraries of all kinds nationwide. Only by not making further cuts to LSTA in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill will we 1) ensure that Americans of all ages have sufficient access to libraries, broadband and information services 2) provide libraries the resources they need to improve literacy skills and academic achievement, and 3) help Americans search for and find jobs.

We recognize the difficult constraints the budget faces, but we believe it is crucial to invest in our nation's libraries in this year more than ever.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva


Rush Holt



Ted Deutch



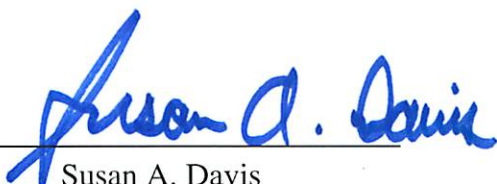
Danny K. Davis



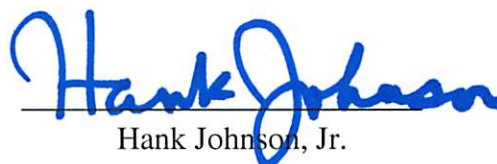
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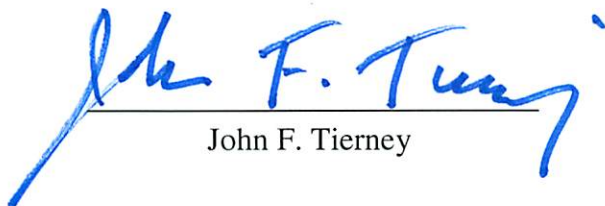
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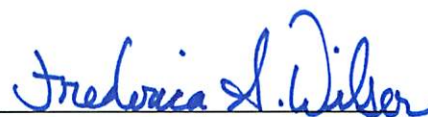
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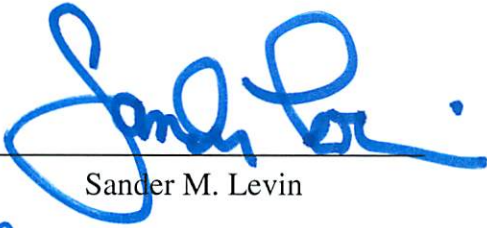
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Mazie Hirono

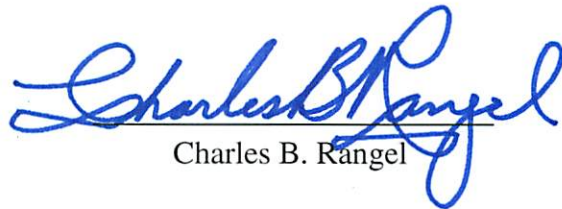


Donna M. Christensen


Sander M. Levin


Gregorio Sablan

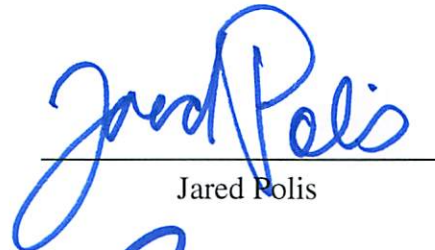

Laura Richardson


Charles B. Rangel


Jerry McNerney

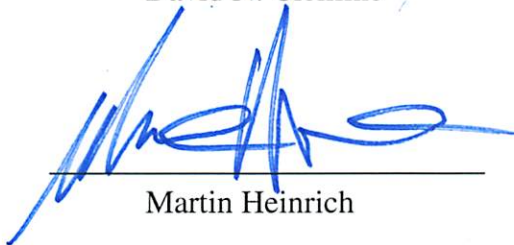

Michael H. Michaud

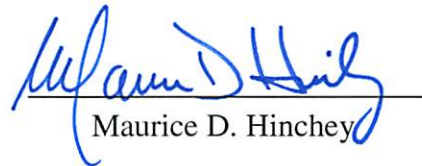

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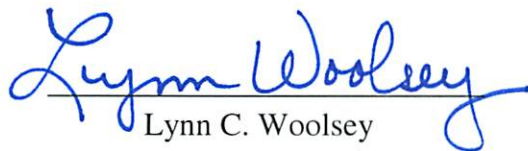

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Robert E. Andrews


Earl Blumenauer

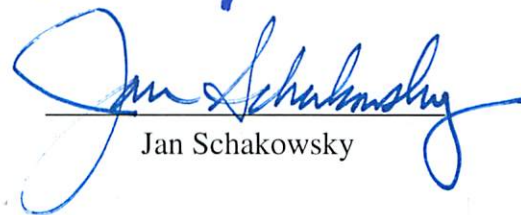

Yvette Clarke

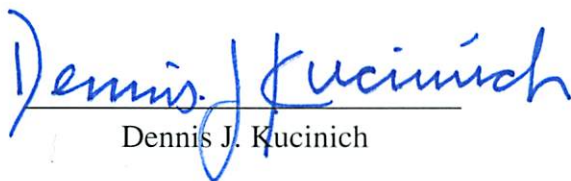

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John Yarmuth

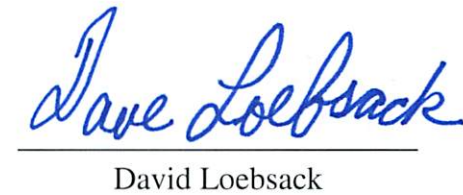

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Dennis J. Kucinich


Michael E. Capuano


Robert C. Scott


David Loeb sack


Carl Fath


Li M


Carl Fath