March 29, 2012

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

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

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

We write to urge you to support the education, workforce, and economic development needs of Americans by providing at least level funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) in the FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Libraries serve a unique and important role in providing free access to all types of information and computing services. The demand for such services has grown in concert with the need to apply online for many jobs and government services and as Americans have been increasingly unable to afford broadband in their homes. Indeed, throughout the economic downturn, patrons have been turning to their local library for assistance and access to essential information on a wide range of topics.

LSTA funding helps libraries meet community needs, better utilize technology to provide enhanced services, and reach underserved populations. Robust federal support for the state formula program and competitive grants under LSTA is more essential than ever as it will expand the job search and skill building services that are in great demand; ensure access to vital online information and specialized business tools and resources; and retain librarians while recruiting new entrants to this important field.

We urge you to provide at least level funding for LSTA in order to ensure that Americans of all ages have access to information and can gain needed skills.

Thank you for your continued support for sustaining and strengthening the work and reach of our nation’s libraries.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]
Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby
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