

Washington Office
1615 New Hampshire Ave., NW, First Floor
Washington, DC 20009-2520

ALA American Library Association

February 22, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee

Dear Appropriators:

As Congress enters the final stage of the FY 2018 appropriations cycle, the library community wishes to express its thanks to the House and Senate Appropriations Committee for standing with libraries in support of funding for important programs that benefit patrons across the country. We appreciate Congress recognizing the need for additional spending to make the necessary investments in domestic programs and we strongly urge you to increase the 302(b) allocation for the Labor Health and Human Services (LHHS) Subcommittee FY 2018 bill by its proportional share of the additional spending under the recent caps deal. We hope LHHS will receive enough to make additional critical investments in programs like the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

America's more than 120,000 libraries—in every Congressional district—constitute a robust infrastructure immediately available to address national priorities in efficient, cost-effective ways and meet many of the challenges our nation faces. Libraries play a critical role in every community. From assisting veterans in their transition to civilian life, entrepreneurs utilizing library databases to expand their business, helping children develop literacy skills and complete homework, to helping rural and underserved communities access the Internet; libraries are central to making communities a better place to live.

A responsible federal investment in the LSTA (with a mandatory 1/3 state match) makes many of these services possible. LSTA is the only federal program for public libraries and allow libraries to create new services to meet the changing demands of its patrons. In addition, the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program allows school libraries to provide targeted literacy tools and skills development for underserved children. Libraries thank Congress for rejecting the Administration's recommendation to eliminate LSTA and IAL funding and providing \$187.6 million in funding for LSTA and \$27 million in funding in the Senate Appropriations Committees bill. Investing in our nation's libraries is investing in services that contribute to local economies, develop the workforce, and foster achievement; a return on investment that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees support.

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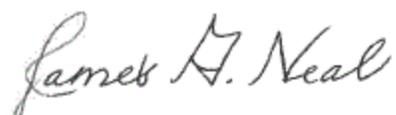
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Last year, 144 Representatives in the House and 45 Senators signed the appropriations letter for LSTA. 146 Representatives and 37 Senators signed the IAL letter. All letters received bipartisan support.

As the final funding bills are being written, libraries in your state urge increased support for these important programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James G. Neal".

James G. Neal
President
American Library Association