Library Services and Construction Act: Testimonies (1994): Correspondence 02

Karen Ruddy

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TO: Task Force Members on LSCA Reauthorization

FROM: Dr. Karen Ruddy
Director, Chickasaw Library System
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DATE: March 14, 1995

RE: Suggested Direction for the Reauthorization of LSCA program

Please remember that the libraries in the rural areas are, for the most part, still very desperate little places.

Please remember that the original need for the LSCA program has not changed -- the rural areas are still the most disenfranchised, the most in need of help, the most neglected, and the most isolated from accurate up-to-date information.

Please remember the more populated areas have more people to share costs to get access to accurate, up-to-date information that can enlighten them and help them make good decisions in their lives.

Please remember that Toffler's vision of electronic access to information fits the isolated distance-resource-scarce rural-information-seeker more than it does the urban information-seeker who can usually dial into a local database using a local (no cost) number and get access to fountains of information.

I fear the thrust of your re-directed plan will be to give to those who already have - more - and take from those who have so little.

The small communities that I serve have thrived on the LSCA programs. The small communities need extra help to get the money now, when it is somewhat directed their way. What chance will they have if it is re-directed toward the other populations.
What chance will they have if the only programs that had the rural interest at heart are no longer targeted toward them.

YOU ARE RIGHT, the directions of the program need to be adjusted - the Task Force suggestions on electronic access to information are RIGHT ON - but the most deserving recipients of this access most logically must be the rural communities.

Alvin Toffler says in Powershift that the battle for control of knowledge and means of communication will determine who controls power in our future.

Electronic access to information through The Internet also called the Information Highway must be made available to the grass roots of our country. The small towns that balance us, nourish us, and make us whole must be able to access these "information stores" and what better way than through the outlets that have provided that information in the past, the public libraries.

Dr. [Signature]