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STATEMENT BY SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL ON FLOOR CONSIDERATION OF S.J. RES. 26, A JOINT RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Mr. President, it is a pleasure to speak today in support of S.J. Res 26, the bill to authorize and request the President to call a White House Conference on Library and Information Services sometime between September 1989 and September 1991.

In fact this will be the second White House Conference to address the important issues facing our library and information services communities. I was proud to be the Senate sponsor of the first Conference that was held with great success in 1979.

It is time once again to focus in a national forum on a wide range of important issues that are of critical importance to the well-being of our library community. Few will dispute how useful such a Conference can be in targeting national attention to ion to library needs and to building broader support for improved library services.

Such a Conference is very timely as we strive to improve America's competitive standing in the international community. Over the last decade the drastic changes in information technology have had a far-reaching impact on the way our modern society functions. We must be as sure of maintaining access to information as we are of knowing how to organize and use it.
The Conference shall be planned and conducted under the direction of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science whose responsibility it is to insure the participation of individuals and organizations at the local, state, regional and national levels. Though the national conference may be a few years away, it is time now for the states to begin serious planning for their own state-level gatherings at which conference themes will be developed to be taken later to the national forum.

In an effort to keep expenses to a minimum, this bill authorizes $5 million to help fund the White House Conference. The total cost is apt to be higher, but other financial sources must be found for the balance. The future health and vitality of our libraries is certainly worth this investment. This second White House Conference will be a significant reaffirmation of our commitment to our libraries.

I commend this legislation to my colleagues, and hope that they will join me in supporting it.