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STATEMENT BY SENATOR PELL

Joint Congressional Hearing

"Library and Information Services for
Literacy, Productivity and Democracy"

White House Conference on Library and Information Services

July 11, 1991

It is a great pleasure to open this historic joint hearing at the 1991 White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services and to share this platform with my distinguished House colleagues.

As the lead Senate sponsor of the resolution that established this Conference, it gives me great satisfaction to know that this event - which so many people have worked toward - is now occurring as we meet.

12 years have passed since the first White House Conference was held in 1979. The positive results of that Conference were indeed impressive. These included increases in LSCA funding, the sharp growth in the number of friends of libraries groups and, perhaps most significant, was the remarkable increase in public awareness of libraries and how these important institutions influence all of our lives.

It is in large part because of the central role of libraries in the lives of American citizens, that this second conference received such a ringing endorsement from Members of Congress. 72 Senators co-sponsored the resolution that established

this second major national meeting on libraries and information services.

Today the Congress has come to the White House Conference to meet with you and to hear from you in this special forum. I am delighted that Congressman Williams, a great friend of libraries in the House of Representatives, is here to co-chair. I recall the joint hearing on the LSCA reauthorization that he and I co-chaired just a year or two ago. At that time we agreed to await the recommendations of this Conference before seeking major changes in the Library Services and Construction Act.

I am eager to hear from you today and pledge to continue to work with you as we strive to do what is best for libraries over the years ahead.