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## White House Conference on Library and Information Services: Joint Hearing (1991): Speech 02

Claiborne Pell

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REMARKS BY SENATOR PELL

RHODE ISLAND GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION SERVICES  
March 16, 1991

It is a great pleasure to be with you all today at the kick-off of the Rhode Island Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services. I am especially proud to be part of this event because it marks a culmination of years of hard work and perseverance by many of you in this room. Back in 1987 when I introduced the resolution calling for a second White House Conference on Libraries, many people were skeptical that such an event would ever occur.

It was largely because of the success of the first White House Conference in 1979 that we forged ahead with plans for a second one. This earlier conference resulted in a remarkable increase in public awareness of libraries and their impact on individuals, the economy and the nation. A total of 22 of the 64 resolutions adopted at the 1979 conference were ultimately incorporated by the Congress into the Library Services and Construction Act. States like Rhode Island saw steady increases in library funding as a result of the 1979 Governor's Conference.

It is my hope that the conferences like this one that are being held around the country can re-establish the fact that libraries are vitally important to our national interest. It is also important to know that the Congress will be eagerly awaiting

the recommendations coming out of the 1991 conference. While the Library Services and Construction Act was reauthorized in 1990, it was agreed at the time that major changes in this important legislation would await the findings of the White House Conference and be incorporated into the LSCA during the next reauthorization. Whatever you accomplish in the next two days here can indeed have a lasting impact.

So many of you have had a hand in bringing us to this great day for Rhode Island libraries and I want to salute you all and add my personal thanks for your efforts. I particularly want to mention Joan Reeves for her tireless advocacy on behalf of libraries and for her leadership both as Chair of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce and now as a member of the White House Conference Advisory Committee.

Others who share crucial leadership roles in this impressive effort are Carol diPrete, who I am delighted now serves on the National Commission on Libraries, Bruce Daniels, the Executive Director of our Department of State Library Services and Bill Allen, the Chair of this Governor's Conference.

I also want to express my admiration and friendship for Congressman Jack Reed and say how glad I am to have him as a colleague in Washington. I certainly look forward to working with him in advancing the cause of libraries.

Thank you for inviting me to join you today and I wish you great success as you embark on this effort to shape the future of library services in Rhode Island and the nation.