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Correspondence 06

Paul Simon

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July 9, 1991

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Appropriations'
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS
and Education
SH-531 Hart Senate Office Bldng.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Tom:

As you know, on July 10, 1991, the Subcommittee will mark-up H.R. 2707. Included in this bill are House appropriations for the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), which we've strongly supported over the years.

Libraries are an important educational tool and a vital resource for American society. We are concerned that the House appropriations for LSCA are insufficient for maintaining adequate library services and programs. Without sufficient funding, an important avenue for improving the status of American education, for providing educational resources, skills and job training to Americans of all ages, and for combatting illiteracy in all communities across the nation can be lost. Libraries are an important investment in the future of America and we can no longer afford to neglect them.

As you and your colleagues prepare Senate appropriations, we ask that you keep in mind the importance of libraries to the future of America and increase LSCA appropriations.

Specifically,

* For Title I, Public Library Services, the House appropriates $83,800,000. We hope that the Senate increase appropriation levels to $100,000,000.

* For Title II, Public Library Construction, the House appropriates only $14,218,000, far below the $55,000,000 that the American Library Association deemed necessary for renovations to make libraries accessible to the handicapped, to conserve energy and to enhance library technology.

* For Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation, the House appropriates $19,908,000. We believe that $35,000,000 is necessary to adequately fund this program.
We do not have to tell you how imperative it is that we combat illiteracy. We are concerned about the House’s $8,163,000 appropriation for Title VI, Library Literacy, and would like to see the Senate appropriate $10,000,000 for this vital program.

Finally, the increasingly global economy demands that America grow out of its cultural isolationism. For far too long, Americans have been uninformed about the cultures and languages of our neighbors. We are very pleased to see that our colleagues in the House have appropriated $1,476,000 for Title V, Foreign Language Materials Acquisition.

We understand that these are times of fiscal constraint. However, each year we have had to fight to secure minimal monies for LSCA. Libraries are a crucial and vital tool for meeting the educational and training challenges that are and will face our great nation.

Through the Subcommittee mark-up, we hope that you will keep in mind the important role that libraries play in our society and increase the LSCA appropriations.

Thank you in advance for all your help and consideration.

Cordially,

Claiborne Pell  
U.S. Senator

Paul Simon  
U.S. Senator

cc:  Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Honorable Mark O. Hatfield