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White House Conference on Library and Information Services: Joint Hearing (1991): Report 03

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At 11:15 a.m., November 19, 1979, Senator Claiborne Pell, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and the Humanities of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, and Congressman William D. Ford, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor, convened the joint congressional hearing on library and information services. This hearing, held at the site of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, was intended, in Senator Pell's words, to "provide the two subcommittees with some initial recommendations that the Members could review in the very near future."

Appreciating the important role the Congress played in the sponsorship of the Conference, the Program Subcommittee of the Conference Advisory Committee proposed that a joint hearing, sponsored by the Conference and conducted by the appropriate congressional committees, be held on the last day of the formal sessions of the Conference. Concurring with this recommendation, the Advisory Committee designated Robert L. Chartrand, Chairman of the Program Subcommittee, to oversee the implementation of the hearing. Charles Benton, Chairman of the Conference and Chairman of NCLIS, explored the idea with Senator Claiborne Pell, Congressman William Ford, and Congressman John Brademas, the original House sponsors for the Conference. After receiving these Members' enthusiastic support, three key congressional aides were assigned to assist in planning the hearing: Richard Jerue and David Morse, from the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and the Humanities; and Roberta Stanley from the House Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education. In addition, Mary Alice Hedge Reszetar, Associate Director of NCLIS; Jack Duncan, legislative consultant to the Conference; and Jean-Paul Emard, analyst in information sciences for the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress, were named to the planning group.

Faced with a tight Conference program and a limited amount of available time for the hearings, the planning group determined that two witnesses for each of the five Conference themes would be asked to testify before a joint panel of Senate and House Members. Care was taken to invite 10 Conference delegates who could speak knowledgeably about the issues, based on vocation and experience. They were asked to submit written statements that could be summarized for oral presentation at the hearing.

Attending the hearing were the following:

Representative John Brademas (Indiana)
Representative George E. Brown, Jr. (California)
Representative John H. Buchanan, Jr. (Alabama)
Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada (Puerto Rico)
Representative William D. Ford (Michigan)
Representative Albert Gore (Tennessee)
Senator Jacob K. Javits (New York)
Senator Claiborne Pell (Rhode Island)
Senator Robert T. Stafford (Vermont)
Representative Ted S. Weiss (New York)

In their opening statements, the Members paid tribute to the delegates, alternates, and observers attending the Conference, citing their hard work in developing recommendations for solutions to numerous library and information issues. Echoing Senator Pell's remarks regarding the purpose of the hearing, Representative Ford stated that the gathering provided "a sampling of the combined thought of the fine people who had spent a very busy and productive weekend at the Conference," and that the Conference program and the hearing could assist Congress in its "development of a body of knowledge and understanding with respect to the very large and complex array of activities at the local, State, and Federal levels which deal with library sciences and information services."

Chairman Charles Benton, serving as the official host to the Conference, formally greeted the Members on behalf of NCLIS and the Conference. In addition to expressing his appreciation for the Members' support of the Commission, the Conference program, and the delegates' recommendations, Benton expressed the thanks of NCLIS and the Conference to the two staffs of the subcommittees and the Conference program subcommittee.

The order of testimony, determined by the five theme areas, was as follows:

Panel I—Personal Needs

Martha G. Register—Counseling/Rehabilitation Psychologist,
Charlotte Rehabilitation Hospital, Charlotte, North
Carolina

Gary Young—Director, Cultural Heritage Center, Yakima
Indian Nation, Toppenish, Washington

Panel II—Lifelong Learning

Susan Edmonson—Ashland Child Development Center,
Ashland, Kentucky

Nasario Garcia—Professor, University of Colorado, Pueblo,
Colorado

Panel III—Organizations and the Professions

David E. King—Librarian and Senior Editor, Standard
Educational Corporation, Chicago, Illinois

Dwight Andrew Myers—Assistant Vice President, Sales
Administration and Planning, General Book Marketing
Division, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico

Panel IV—Governing Society

Justice Sam Ross Harshbarger—Supreme Court of Appeals,
Charleston, West Virginia

Whitney North Seymour, Jr.—Director, Emergency
Committee to Save Our Public Libraries, New York, New
York

Panel V—International Cooperation

Louis A. Lerner—U.S. Ambassador to Norway, Oslo,
Norway

Gilbert A. Sprauve—College of the Virgin Islands, St. Johns,
Virgin Islands

In addition, Delia Martinez, delegate from Nevada, and the Honorable Carl Elliott, delegate from Alabama, were invited to present a resolution passed by the delegates earlier that morning. This resolution called for the creation of an Office of Library and Information Services in the new Department of Education, directed by an Assistant Secretary of Education. This Assistant Secretary should: 1) administer all grants and programs currently administered by the Office of Libraries and Learning Resources; and 2) establish communications with all Federal programs related to library and information services. Senator Pell assured the witnesses that this topic would be discussed with Secretary-designate Hufstedler at her Senate confirmation hearings.

The remarks prepared by Martha Register were read by Annette Phinazee, Dean of the School of Library Sciences, North Carolina Central University. Ms. Register, a paraplegic, asked that the members of each participating committee consider and pass appropriate legislation that would take into account the following goals relative to library and information services in meeting personal needs: 1) serve people in solving day-to-day problems; 2) assist individuals in coping with trauma or crisis; 3) inform the public of news and current events; 4) support interest in cultural heritage, religion, and family life; and 5) accommodate needs in entertainment, recreation, and leisure activities. Ms. Register also stressed the need for legislation that would serve special constituencies, such as the homebound, senior citizens, and the handicapped.

Gary Young's testimony also centered on the need for library and information services to a special constituency, the American Indian. Citing this country's shift "from a policy of the melting pot society to that of recognizing and appreciating—in fact, valuing—cultural diversity," Young requested that Congress pass specific Indian library legislation. Through active support and enactment of such measures as the National Indian Omnibus Library Bill, the Senate and the House could aid in averting the "high rate of poverty, underemployment, and unemployment" that have plagued many Indian nations in the past.

In addressing library and information services for lifelong learning, Susan Edmonson reviewed the entire spectrum of education in American society, from childhood through adulthood. According to Edmonson, legislation was necessary in this and succeeding Congresses to: 1) achieve an extension of basic library and information services to all areas of our country; 2) provide needed and necessary library media centers and strong information retrieval skills training in every school; 3) establish a nationwide network of libraries; and 4) designate libraries as educational agencies so that such libraries could be deliberately included in those legislative programs aimed at continuing education.

Nasario Garcia, in follow-on testimony, reviewed five areas that have had a direct impact on lifelong learning: 1) the ever-increasing use of libraries for practical, factual, consumer-oriented information versus more philosophical aspects of information; 2) the Federal Government's role in assisting libraries in fulfilling their

responsibility of providing some form of continuing education; 3) the use of networking among libraries and information centers to provide faster linkage between metropolitan and rural communities and to assist in more expeditious interlibrary loans; 4) the Federal Government's continued support and improvement of information dissemination, especially through the expansion of the Federal depository library system; and 5) the eradication of illiteracy. Through the revision of existing legislation, such as the Library Services and Construction Act (Public Law 88-269 and its amendments), and the development of new programs, these five areas of concern, according to Garcia, might begin to provide needed services that would "benefit all citizens, young and old, rich and poor, as we prepare to enter the 1980's." Furthermore, "nowhere is information more central to success than in the work-a-day world of business and the professions. Results of success in putting good information to work are found in the production of safer and more efficient products, in more effective services, in more personally satisfying work experiences, and in increased economic productivity."

With this thought in mind, David King examined the roles played by special libraries and information centers—some 8,000 to 15,000 in number—in providing needed information to organizations and professionals. King specifically felt that Congress should: 1) scrutinize State policies regarding network participation by all special libraries and information centers and formulate legislation that would allow these entities to use such federally funded networks; 2) offer financial incentives to States in order to encourage them to include specialized information providers in statewide information and library networks; 3) support a national assessment of existing collections of information resources; 4) adopt stronger legislation to allow greater use of government-sponsored research and information; and 5) continue the funding and support of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

In discussing the trend toward increased use of modern information technology and its ability to deliver information goods and services in a more timely fashion, Dwight Myers asserted that "archaic local public sector economics, erratically funded, cannot continue to be the main support of our public system. Local libraries cannot fund the start-up of national, regional, or even local data bases." What Myers proposed is a national library agency that would: 1) coordinate existing Federal programs of information service; 2) reduce duplication of effort and resources in all mandated Federal legislation requiring information access; and 3) establish national policies to eliminate unproductive competition and antagonisms between the public and private sectors. Citizen access to such congressional and executive branch data banks as the Congressional Research Service's SCORPIO system and the Department of Energy's RECON system should be encouraged. While strong general support for a national library act is necessary, Myers asserted that a citizens' advisory group, made up of one delegate from each State delegation to the Conference, should be established to work in close conjunction with the NCLIS staff. Such an arrangement would ensure the broadest possible interpretation of and support for such a measure. Finally, Myers suggested that definite

provisions must be devised to guarantee the payment of information producers for their creative efforts.

In summarizing his testimony, Justice Sam Ross Harshbarger emphasized increasing literacy, extending library services, augmenting school services, and providing outreach programs "to those unserved or unable to serve themselves." In addition, Justice Harshbarger reaffirmed the protections provided in the first amendment that "guarantee everyone access to materials, guarantee the right to write, guarantee publishing rights, and of course the other side of those issues is that people be able to use those materials which are available to them." Only by making the strongest efforts in these areas could government officials make every citizen realize the full potential of libraries and information services and "increase, hopefully, the ability of the American people to govern themselves effectively."

In tracing the development of our democratic society and the parallel growth of free, community-based libraries in this country, Whitney North Seymour Jr., singled out the increasing problems faced by today's public libraries: reduced hours of service, staff cutbacks, and limited acquisition programs. Having been affected by reduced local tax bases and the continued upward spiral of inflation, Seymour pointed out that "as the free public library is increasingly in jeopardy, so our freedom comes into jeopardy." The means by which Seymour advocated a change in public libraries' fortunes is through Congress' endorsement and passage of a national library act that would "incorporate the general principles, goals, and objectives of S.1124 96th Congress." To show support for such a proposal, the joint panel was presented with petitions signed by a number of delegates and observers. In subsequent questioning, Seymour stated that, as a result of reviewing the total array of resolutions voted upon by the delegates, "the Act should be expanded quite substantially in its coverage, and that it should probably include not only public libraries directly, but also the school and academic libraries."

In presenting his views on library and information services in a world where there is an increasing need for international cooperation, Ambassador Louis Lerner stressed that "information is hot; information is political; information is geo-strategic; and information is defense as well. We must use whatever we have to move information into an international arena, with the United States as the leader." Ambassador Lerner outlined for the joint panel eight key points that he felt were of both national and international importance: 1) Americans must be made aware of the impact the information revolution will have on their lives; 2) as this revolution unfolds, there must be a continued dialogue within government and between the government and the private information sector; 3) there must be a viable Federal and national information policy; 4) market forces will be important in the information era, thus better planning in regards to needed and affordable public and private information networks must be carried out; 5) the United States should sponsor special programs in library sciences, information storage and retrieval techniques, and modern information technology for foreign librarians and information specialists, especially those from developing

countries; 6) our Nation's young people should begin immediate training in foreign languages in order to communicate, comprehend, and exchange ideas and information; 7) with the continued compression of time and space, coupled with faster means of communications, world events are no longer isolated incidents but potential threats to our national security; and 8) as a world leader in information, the United States must devise "practical yet creative programs" in order to assist developing countries.

Gilbert Sprauve amplified Ambassador Lerner's final point by recommending the development of a model information exchange program that could be located in the Virgin Islands, his native region. Specifically, Sprauve proposed the establishment, through joint Federal and local government participation, of a model center for international information exchange. Such a center would have three primary functions: 1) to serve as a regional network facility; 2) to be an adjunct to the Library of Congress in this part of the West Indies; and 3) to serve as a clearinghouse for information goods and services. Stressing the importance that United States Information Service libraries have played as "bridgeheads against the tyranny of ignorance," the development of such a model center "tomorrow, in the place of one of those USIS libraries of two decades ago, would signal a timely and appropriate new thrust in the foreign policy of this Nation."

After thanking the panelists and the audience, Congressman Ford mentioned a newly released book, *Information Technology Serving Society*, which is dedicated to Congressman Brademas and the late Congressman William Steiger of Wisconsin, advocates of strong information-oriented congressional and national programs. Prior to adjourning the hearing, the Chair announced that the hearing record would be left open so that additional comments and written testimony could be incorporated into the proceedings.

3/21/91

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE - 1991

TIME	Tues., July 9	Wednes., July 10	Thursday, July 11	Friday July 12	SATURDAY July 13
7:00	D	D R	O R	O R C	O R
7:30	E	E E	B E	B E R	B E
8:00	L	L S	S S	S S C	S S
8:30	E	& O	E O	E O	E O
9:00	G R	O U	R U	R U	R U
9:30	A E	B R	V R	V R C	V R
10:00	T S	S C	E C	E C O	E C
10:30	E O	E	R E	R E N	R E
11:00	U	R	R C	R C	R C
11:30	& R	G C	E E	E E C	E E
12:00	C	O E	G N	G N R	G N
12:30	O E	B N	I T	I T C	T
1:00	B	S T	S E	S E	E
1:30	S C	E E	T R	T R	R
2:00	E E	R R	R	R	
2:30	R N	V	A O	A O	
3:00	V T	E O	T P	T P	
3:30	E E	R P	I E	I E	
4:00	R R	E	O N	O N	
4:30	R	R N	N	N	
5:00	E	E	C	C	
5:30	E	G	R	R	
6:00	G		R	DINNER	RECEPTION
6:30	I		C	(6:00-8:00)	(6:30-7:30) RAM
7:00	S				BREAK (7:30-8:00)
7:30	T		M		
8:00	R		E		CLOSING BANQUET
8:30	A		E		(8:00-12:00) RAM
9:00			T		
9:30			S		
10:00					
10:30					
11:00					
11:30					
12:00					

LEGEND
 CC = CONVENTION CENTER
 RAM = RAMADA
 BOTH = CC & RAMADA

*holding in auditorium
 of Ramada Renaissance Hotel.*