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MR. PELL. Mr. President, during this 28th annual observation of National Library Week (April 14 - 20) it seems altogether fitting and proper that I take this opportunity to introduce legislation calling for the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be held in 1989. You may recall that I announced my intention to do this last August 3rd when I placed in the Record the Department of Education's publication, "Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Respond to A Nation at Risk." There was much food for thought in that document, highlighting the role of our nation's libraries in helping to foster excellence in education and in providing adequate, up-to-date resources for a learning society.

Now, during National Library Week, we are all particularly conscious of the budgetary dilemma that besets us, with a $200 billion deficit confronting us. We note that libraries, too, at every level are beleagured by budgetary problems. As a matter of fact, they suffered from double digit inflation long before the rest of the country, in terms of trying to keep pace with rising book and periodical subscription costs. And when the rest of us worried over gasoline shortages, they too felt the pinch in their pocketbooks when the prices soared for petrochemical-based products, such as films, microfiche and audio tapes. More recently, libraries have been turning to automated circulation systems, computerized resource sharing networks and other high tech devices to modernize their services and to increase productivity in order to keep up with increasingly sophisticated user demands.
Accordingly, it appears none too soon for library users, civic leaders and lawmakers at all levels to join forces in working with librarians and suppliers of library and information service products to consider what new directions we expect our libraries to take in the future. Because so much information becomes available only online and for a fee per use, the library role in guiding users to the most appropriate source in whatever format and to providing access to those who could not otherwise afford needed information, will be crucial.

Although I do not for a minute believe that books are going to disappear, I do envision libraries widely utilising satellite receivers and optical discs and microwave devices to help resolve storage and preservation problems as well as to facilitate delivery of services to their patrons in remote areas and those precluded from using the library because of age or handicap.

It is important to keep in mind that a significant aspect of the White House Conference process is the preceding series of local town hall meetings, speakouts and Governors' conferences held in each of the states to help our citizens assess and better use the resources we have on a nationwide basis.

I would eagerly invite those of you who share my interest and concern, that all our citizens have access to quality library and information services to join me in cosponsoring this legislation calling for a second White House Conference on Library and Information Services in 1989.