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White House Conference on Library and Information Services: Early Stages (1979-1985): Report 04

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Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI), the original sponsor of legislation resulting in the 1979 WHCLIS, introduced April 16 S.J. Res. 112, calling for a 2nd White House Conference on Library and Information Services no later than 1989. His introductory statement is reprinted here. The companion bill, H.J. Res. 244, was introduced April 18 by Rep. Bill Ford (D-MI). His introductory speech of June 19 is reprinted on the reverse of this sheet.

June 19, 1985

(Rep. Ford continued)

The president of the American Library Association, E.J. Josey, of the New York State Library, has stated the issue succinctly:

Nobody would deny the utility of many of these services provided by the private sector, but [they] are not available to all of the American people; their purpose is to yield a profit, and they are designed only for those who can pay for them. Nor do they have any obligation to provide access to all or any information; only that information which suppliers deem profitable or potentially so. Only the preservation of public services, publicly supported, can assure that each individual has equal and ready access to information, whether provision of that information to that individual is economic (i.e., profitable in private sector terms) or not.

The purpose of House Joint Resolution 244 calling for a White House Conference on Library and Information Services in 1989 is simple: To build public awareness of the precarious state of American library service today and to facilitate informed, grassroots, policymaking concerning the future of all types of libraries. Postal policies, Federal information guidelines, Federal funding for libraries, the future of the library as a publicly funded institution providing public service to all—these are vitally important issues affecting all Americans.

And there are other issues affecting libraries that I could mention—the contracting out of Federal libraries as commercial activities, and the increase in library telecommunications costs as a result of access and divestiture related tariffs, for instance. They are not isolated subjects but interrelated issues. Grassroots involvement of the American public, made possible through the White House Conference format, is urgently needed to examine, to protect, and to nurture the many types of libraries throughout the Nation, which together in all their diversity comprise the impressive collections and array of services that make American libraries a national treasure, a storehouse of information freely accessible to all, and the envy of freedom-loving peoples throughout the world.

For this reason, I have sponsored House Joint Resolution 244 calling for a White House Conference on Library and Information Services, and I invite my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation.●

By Mr. PELL:
S.J. Res. 112. Joint resolution to authorize and request the President to call a White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be held not later than 1989, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

fiche, and audio tapes. More recently, libraries have been turning to automated circulation systems, computerized resource, sharing networks, and other high tech devices no modernize their services and to increase productivity in order to keep up with increasingly sophisticated user demands.

Accordingly, it appears none to 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 1 minute believe that books are going to disappear, I do envision libraries widely utilizing 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.●

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

● Mr. PELL. Mr. President, during this 28th annual observance 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 3d 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 beleaguered 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, micro-

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