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White House Conference on Library and Information Services: Early Stages (1979-1985): Correspondence 03

Bruce E. Daniels

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December 17, 1986

Mr. Alexander Crary
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Room 428 Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20514

Dear Sandy:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I’ve sent to Senator Pell.
I will call you after the holidays to talk about it.

Sincerely yours,

Bruce E. Daniels
Acting Director

BED:las
enclosure
December 16, 1986

The Honorable Claiborne deB. Pell
The United States Senate
325 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

As you know, I have been a strong supporter of a second White House Conference on Library and Information Services. I am writing to you now, however, to ask that you postpone the reintroduction of the White House Conference resolution. I have reached the conclusion that now is not a good time. There are several reasons for me reaching this decision.

President Reagan recently submitted the name of Kenneth Tomlinson for appointment as Chair of the National Commission on Library and Information Science. At this point in time, we do not know in what directions the National Commission will move under Mr. Tomlinson's leadership. I feel very strongly that before proceeding with a second White House Conference, the library community must feel comfortable with the future plans of the National Commission.

Another concern is the record of the other White House Conferences that have occurred during the Reagan Administration. Attempts have been made to use White House Conferences as vehicles to endorse the policies and concepts of the Reagan Administration. It is true that a second White House Conference would probably not take place during the Reagan Administration if the 100th Congress were to pass the authorizing legislation. I feel, however, that it would be important to have a better idea who might be the next President before proceeding with another White House Conference. The library community certainly would not want a White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be used as a vehicle to support the dismantling of federal library programs or to support a reactionary ideology that would promote censorship.
Hopefully, the circumstance will develop in Washington which will eliminate the concerns that I have expressed in this letter. I and my colleagues in Rhode Island have appreciated your support of a second White House Conference and of federal library programs. Without the support of leaders such as yourself, the federal role in the funding of library programs would have been lost.

I look forward to seeing you in the near future. Best wishes for the upcoming holiday season!

Sincerely yours,

Bruce E. Daniels
Acting Director