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Senator Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
186 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are requesting your assistance in restoring funding to the Department of Education Library Programs, both in the Higher Education Act and in the Library Services and Construction Act. Your past support for these critically important programs is much appreciated, and we thank you for your commitment to the vital role of libraries in our nation's education system.

We were deeply disappointed to learn that the President's FY 1994 budget request eliminates all HEA library programs, and several programs under the LSCA. In fact, of the 24 programs proposed for elimination under the Department of Education budget, one-fourth are library programs.

As a member of the Education, Arts, and the Humanities Subcommittee, you participated in reauthorizing the Higher Education Act last year to reflect the increasingly electronic networked environment in which libraries operate, and to educate and train professionals to be proficient in the emerging technologies.

The funding of these programs would greatly benefit other government technology efforts. The President has proposed a new technology agenda to provide funding for pilot projects to connect schools, hospitals and libraries to networks. The success of this program will depend upon the ability of research and academic libraries to share their resources via the networks, and to have properly trained librarians and users in how to access and better manage electronic information resources. The HEA II programs make such efforts possible in Iowa and throughout the nation, and they must be funded if we are to use library resources to best effect.

The LSCA programs slated for elimination would remove assistance for public libraries to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to upgrade technologically obsolete library buildings, to acquire foreign language materials, and to provide critical adult literacy programs.

We request that for FY 1994 the subcommittee provide FY 1993 levels of funding for all the zero-budgeted HEA and LSCA library programs. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.