White House Conference on Library and Information Services: Early Stages (1979-1985): Correspondence 09

Robert T. Stafford

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Mr. Daniel W. Casey  
Commissioner, NCLIS  
202 Scarboro Drive  
Syracuse, New York 13209

Dear Mr. Casey:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the proposed White House Conference on Libraries. As you know I was a cosponsor and participant in the original conference held in 1979. That event greatly increased public awareness of libraries and the value of their services to local communities.

I have not yet added my name as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 112 for two very specific reasons. The current budget crisis threatens federal funds that support library services. As you know, for the past five years, the Congress has rejected an Administration proposal to eliminate all federal spending in support of public and private library collections. The first round of Gramm-Rudman cuts have been felt by every library in the country, most particularly the Library of Congress. In light of these fiscal restraints I question the wisdom of spending ten to fifteen million dollars to hold a second White House Conference at this time. Secondly, Vermonters appear to be evenly divided on the issue of support for a White House Conference.

Let me assure you that I will continue to review the information I have received about the proposed conference and to follow budget developments in the Congress that affect federal spending in support of library services. I greatly appreciate your taking the time to share your views with me on this matter. My record of support for public libraries speaks for itself. I have worked hard in my career in Congress to secure federal dollars necessary to make libraries accessible to everyone. My hesitance to support the White House Conference in no way diminishes my commitment to library programs.

Sincerely yours,

Robert T. Stafford  
Chairman  
 Subcommittee on Education,  
 Arts and Humanities