Library Services and Construction Act (1988-1991): Correspondence 08

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The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am hoping to reach you before your budget package for FY 1993 is put in final form. I have kept in close touch with the progress of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, and I fear the impact of another zero or near zero budget request for library programs in FY 1993 would be most unfortunate.

In accordance with the law establishing the White House Conference, the President will be transmitting his recommendations concerning the Conference to Congress in February. As I understand the process, this is likely to be just after the Administration's budget request is released. In my view, a zero budget recommendation for libraries would undermine any positive recommendations the President may make in his White House Conference report.

For many years, I have been promoting libraries as invaluable community cultural and educational institutions. I chaired a Congressional hearing held during the recent White House Conference and was moved by the heartfelt tributes I heard to the ability of libraries to change people's lives for the better. I urge you not to underestimate the strength and commitment of our national library community and the eagerness with which it awaits both next year's budget for libraries and the President's recommendations.

The many librarians, library educators, library trustees and friends, library users in every state, and library and education associations, stand poised to work cooperatively with the Administration and Congress to implement the spirit of the White House Conference recommendations. A zero budget for the Department of Education library programs in FY 1993 would certainly chill this positive environment. It would please me immensely to see a budget request for libraries which at least matched the current levels of funding.

Ever sincerely,

Claiborne Pell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education
Arts and Humanities