1993


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Representative William Natcher
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6924

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. We are appreciative of your past support for these critically important programs, 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 Fiscal Year 1994 Budget request eliminates all HEA library programs, and several programs under the LSCA. In fact, of the twenty-four programs proposed for elimination under the Department of Education budget, almost one-fourth are library programs.

The recently passed Higher Education Amendments of 1992, included programs focusing on networking with an emphasis on enhancing connectivity between libraries, as well as educating and training professionals to be proficient in the new electronic environment.

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 be dependent upon the ability of research and academic libraries to share their resources with the networks, and to have properly trained librarians and users in how to access and better manage electronic information resources. The HEA Title II programs have made these efforts possible, and they must be funded if we are to continue our progress in utilizing information resources.

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 would request that you provide $18.4 million for the Library Programs and fully fund the LSCA programs for FY 94. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Dale E. Kildee, M.C.