

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: COVID-19 Relief for America's Libraries

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the undersigned businesses and nonprofit organizations, we write to request relief for America's libraries in the next phase of coronavirus legislation. COVID-19 has caused significant revenue losses for libraries, resulting in thousands of furloughs and layoffs to date. Fiscal stabilization is needed to preserve crucial library services for students, jobseekers, and small businesses.

America's libraries employ nearly 370,000 workers and generate billions of dollars in economic activity, including the purchase of more than \$4 billion in books and other materials and \$1 billion in capital infrastructure annually. However, these jobs and services are at risk as COVID-19 has heavily stressed library budgets; for instance, more than 92 percent of public library funding comes from local and state revenues, which have declined drastically.

Americans visit libraries more than 1.3 billion times each year. During the economic recovery, library services will be needed even more urgently as impacted businesses and workers search and apply for jobs, navigate small business resources, and learn new career skills.

We respectfully request that Congress provide \$2 billion for fiscal stabilization for libraries through the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. This funding is needed to keep library workers employed and safe, support distance learning and telework, and expand economic recovery services for our communities. We join with more than 100 bipartisan Members of Congress who have voiced their support for library relief.¹ Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Afterschool Alliance
American Federation of Teachers
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Library Association
Association for Rural & Small Libraries

Association of Research Libraries
Baker & Taylor
Brodart
Chief Officers of State Library Agencies
Council of State Archivists
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
EDGE Consulting Partners
Findaway
Hachette Book Group
International Dyslexia Association
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Center for Families Learning
National Coalition for History
National Coalition for Literacy
National Federation of the Blind
National Humanities Alliance
National League of Cities
National School Boards Association
National Writing Project
NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association
OverDrive, Inc.
Reach Out and Read
Reading Is Fundamental
Reading Recovery Council of North America
SAGE Publishing
Service Employees International Union
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Urban Libraries Council
VALUEUSA

¹ See “Levin, Grijalva and Young Lead Bipartisan Letter Urging Support for America’s Libraries in Upcoming COVID-19 Legislation,” April 23, 2020, *available at* <https://andylevin.house.gov/media/press-releases/levin-grijalva-and-young-lead-bipartisan-letter-urging-support-america-s>; letter by Senators Jack Reed, Susan Collins, and 44 additional Senators, to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Charles Schumer, May 1, 2020, *available at* <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/libfunding/fed/Ltr%20to%20Leadership%20Libraries%20and%20LSTA%20CVD-4%20Final.pdf>.