



March 12, 2018

The Honorable Luke Messer
United States House of Representatives
1230 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Messer:

On behalf of our nearly 2,000 individual and institutional members and the 6,000 employees of libraries in Indiana, we thank you for your past support of libraries and urge your support for federal funding. As you may be aware, the White House FY 2019 budget proposal eliminates the majority of federal library funding, including funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). We urge your continued support for the education, workforce, and economic development needs of Americans by providing \$186.6 million for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) in the fiscal year 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Hoosiers rely on school, public and academic libraries for free access to essential information on a wide range of topics, skills training, computers and the Internet. Nearly one in six Hoosiers lives in an area without broadband service. Many more Hoosiers cannot afford it even where it is available. Internet access is critical at a time when applications for many job applications and government services are completed online. Indiana's libraries provide access to digital resources, as well as print resources and trained staff.

Each year, LSTA grants provide approximately \$3 million to statewide, Indiana-specific projects and sub-grants in every congressional district. Indiana officials, not the federal government, decide how best to use LSTA funds to promote innovation, lifelong learning research and access to information for Hoosiers. Indiana is required to provide a 1/3 match for LSTA funding, which means that **a cut in federal support would likely result in a cut to critical programs such as resource sharing, access for people with disabilities, early childhood literacy and technology.**

The administration's budget proposal also cuts funding for the Department of Education's Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program, which helps school libraries provide books, materials, and training focused on serving students in vulnerable communities across our country. While Indiana has not received recent grants, IAL funds are the only dedicated source of federal funding for school libraries.

Libraries are nonpartisan and a critical part of the community. **We respectfully ask you to consider signing on to the Dear Appropriator letters which are circulating in the House, asking for support for these critical programs.** The LSTA support letter is being led by Representative Raul Grijalva (D-AZ). The IAL support letter is being jointly led by Representatives Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Don Young (R-AK), Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Tom MacArthur (R-NJ).

With your role on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, we know you understand the importance of an informed and educated citizenry to our democracy and economy. Children and adults depend on their local libraries to help them access information and the internet, prepare for and succeed in school, apply for jobs, learn new skills and so much more.

Indiana Library Federation leads, educates and advocates to advance library services for the benefit of Indiana residents.

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Allow us to share specifically how a few of the statewide projects benefit Hoosiers:

- Cost-effective resource sharing – LSTA funds provide support to INSPIRE, the state's virtual library; Evergreen, a shared inter-library loan system; and Statewide Circulation Remote Services.
- Access for people with disabilities and the homebound – LSTA grants supports statewide services to the blind and physically impaired, in the form of the Talking Books and Braille Library.
- Early Childhood Literacy – LSTA supports storytime kits, summer reading, early literacy computers and other programming for children and teens.
- Technology – LSTA grants support competitive subgrants for innovations in local communities.
- Digitization – LSTA funds continue the digitization of Indiana's historical records and cultural heritage, which are made available via the internet to all.
- Additionally, subgrants were awarded specifically to benefit the 6th Congressional District for technology and digitization in libraries, such as grants to
 - Bartholomew County Public Library for a digitization project about the Irwin-Sweeney-Miller family and
 - Morrisson-Reeves Library to support the schools 1:1 technology initiative.

We offer a standing invitation for you to visit school, public or academic libraries to see the critical role libraries play in education, employment and quality of life.

The work that libraries do is ongoing and valuable. **Please show your support for our libraries and the communities they serve by signing both "Dear Appropriator" letters - one for LSTA, and one for IAL.**

Should you or your staff have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lucinda Nord, executive director, of Indiana Library Federation at 317-257-2040, ext. 101. She can also arrange a visit to libraries in the 6th district.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

/s/

Edra Waterman
Hamilton East Public Library
ILF Board President

/s/

Susie Highley
Indiana Middle Level Educators
ILF Board President-Elect

/s/

David Peter, PhD
Vincennes University, retired Dean
ILF Board Past-President