On behalf of the American Library Association, a professional, nonprofit organization of approximately 27,000 members, I appreciate the privilege of testifying in support of appropriations to implement the Library Services and Construction Act.

As an organization which has been working nearly 90 years for the development of adequate library services for all the children, youth, and adults of the United States, the American Library Association hails the recently enacted public library legislation as a landmark in the educational, cultural, and scientific progress of the Nation. In passing the Act, the Congress has served the people well and has taken a positive step toward remedying serious deficiencies.

A request to this Subcommittee for Federal funds to be used as matching grants to stimulate the States and localities to operate better public library services is not a new experience for the American Library Association. During the past eight years under the Library Services Act of 1956, on the basis of its accomplishments, you have acted wisely in the public interest, and have made it possible for people in small towns, villages, and farming communities to receive an increasing amount of library service in places where none or where only inadequate service existed before.

We are now urging the Subcommittee to allow the larger amounts authorized under the expanded library program to bring services and facilities to all areas of the United States. The reasons for this recommendation are clear.

As was brought out in the hearings and in the floor debate on the public library bill, sweeping changes during the past decades have taken place in this Nation. Transformations in science, technology, education, and way of living have affected our modern world. Our population has increased enormously, its mobility intensified, and its trend toward clustering in metropolitan areas augmented. There is new emphasis on excellence in education with its individual study, and on having a citizenry which is better educated and trained.
Furthermore, the children and young people in the cities and fringe areas constitute a growing problem and a promising opportunity. Also, because of the inadequacy of many school and college libraries, the influx of millions of students from these institutions -- after school, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays -- into public libraries has created difficulties which require immediate solution. Changes must be made in our public library services and facilities which will adapt them quickly to the needs of our modern world.

Although the Library Services Act of 1956 has lessened many of the deficiencies in library service for the rural areas, a distressing picture remains for the Nation as a whole. For example, some 18 million persons in the United States still have no legal access to local public library services; and in addition, 110 million persons have only inadequate libraries, many of which have small and out-dated collections, and are ill-housed, understaffed, and open for use as little as one or two hours per week. Neither can their resources meet the requests made upon them for specialized service to such groups as older citizens, children and young people, and in such fields as business, technology, continuing education, juvenile delinquency, and others. This fact applies whether the public libraries are rural or urban.

Moreover, many of the existing buildings, with a median age of 53 years and an estimated 29 percent of them constructed before 1901, are inadequate to serve the educational, business, technical and cultural needs of an expanded population.

The Association would like to call attention to a further justification for increasing the present appropriation of $7.5 million. In reporting on library conditions, the States have stressed that the population limitation of 10,000 has hampered greatly their planning for efficient and economical library service. As the State librarian of California put it: "The present Library Services Act now forces us to plan library systems in a sort of hit-or-miss, checkerboard pattern, cutting out medium-sized and larger cities . . . thus removing their resources from the systems being planned and weakening the whole system to the detriment of rural
areas as well." Other State library agencies have registered similar difficulties and have noted that the 1960 Census has radically changed population figures in many places. The new law fortunately has removed this population restriction, so that existing library strengths can be incorporated into sound, comprehensive programs. Additional money is needed to help the States implement this process.

What has been accomplished to date under the original Library Services Act should leave no doubt of similar results in the case of this new legislation. For instance, you may recall that during fiscal years 1957 to 1963 the States and local communities matching expenditures in rural areas were roughly $94,250,000 and Federal allotments were approximately $41,600,000. Even though the States and local communities were required only to match, they did so by more than twice as much.

Looked at in another way, between 1956 and 1962, the Library Services Act was the incentive for a 114.4 percent increase in expenditures by States and 91.7 percent by local communities for public library service in rural areas; and the grants from State revenues to local public libraries was nearly four times as much in 1962 as they were in 1956. All this is clear evidence of what Federal public library legislation can do in the way of stimulation. Persons interested in library development and librarians look forward confidently to what the new bill will do to encourage further the States and local communities to extend and improve public library service to all the population of this Nation.

Opponents of Federal matching grants for good library service have expressed alarm at the amount of money authorized. However, if the Federal Government appropriates for services $25 million annually to be matched by States and local communities, it will be contributing only a relatively small percentage of the total amount required for adequate public library services.

For example, in 1961, the public libraries of the United States spent for their operation $285 million, but they should have spent $480 million according to the minimum standards formulated for reasonably adequate public library service by the
American Library Association. This is an annual deficiency of $195 million. If the figure of $25 million is set against this gap figure of $195 million, the Federal percentage is 12.7; if it is applied to the total amount of $480 million required to give the United States adequate library service, the Federal percentage is 5.2.

For the construction of public library buildings, the American Library Association urges an appropriation of $20 million for fiscal 1964 and $20 million for fiscal 1965 to be matched by the States and in accord with a State plan. In his testimony during the House hearings on the bill, the Commissioner of Education stated that "approximately $280 million is required to overcome the existing shortage of library space. New construction to keep pace with increases in library use would cost $24 million per year." Many of the buildings are old, ill-arranged, crowded for space both as regards readers and books and other library materials.

Preliminary data received by the American Library Association indicate that States are working actively on plans to utilize the full amounts authorized in the Library Services and Construction Act.

For the implementation of the Library Services and Construction Act the American Library Association respectfully urges this Subcommittee to recommend for fiscal 1964 a supplemental appropriation of $20 million for construction and such sums as will grant each State the authorized basic allotment of $100,000 for services (totalling in all about $3,205,000) to enable the States to undertake planning and surveys needed in connection with the enlarged program.

For fiscal 1965 an appropriation of $25 million for services and $20 million for construction is urged.