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Urgent Action Still Needed to Increase Library Funding

Last week, the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over several library programs, recommended funding levels for fiscal year (FY) 2008.

We received word on specific funding levels for library programs. The Subcommittee's recommendation included \$167.5 million for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) state grant program, \$4 million UNDER the \$171.5 million the President requested.

The full \$171.5 million is needed for full implementation of a 2003 law to provide a more equitable distribution of state formula grants. In 2003, all of the states and Congress agreed that the base should be doubled to help even the playing field for the small states while ensuring that large states don't face an undue burden to achieve that. Currently, all funding increases to the state program go to the base, and not to population increases for the large states. The large states have said they will not allow funding increases to go just to the base after this year.

The Subcommittee also provided \$2 million to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for research and statistics. IMLS requested \$3.5 million; \$1 million to cover the responsibilities of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), which was eliminated in the President's budget request and the Subcommittee's mark, and \$2.5 million to fill the responsibilities IMLS is receiving from the Department of Education. IMLS will not be able to fill all of the research and statistics responsibilities without the full \$3.5 million.

Urgent Action needed: Please contact your Member of Congress before the full Appropriations Committee marks up the bill on Thursday June 14. There will not be a chance to amend the Appropriations bill when it moves on to the House floor. The full Committee meeting on Thursday will be the last chance to change the bill so libraries receive the funding needed.

Talking points

- Please bring the total for the LSTA state program from \$167.5 million to \$171.5 million to allow full implementation of a 2003 law to provide a

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more equitable distribution of state formula grants.

- Please provide the full \$3.5 million for research and statistics to IMLS. Research and statistics are critical for libraries to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs.



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