



Maine Library Association

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November 27, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chair
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

The Maine Library Association (MLA) is writing to express our strong support for the passage of S. 3530, the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) scheduled for Committee mark up this week. We thank you, Senators Alexander and Murray, and the committee for acting on this important bill. We appreciate that you value the importance of libraries both here in Maine and nationally.

Maine citizens visit their local library every day for access to the internet, child and adult literacy programs, workforce training, and access to essential information on a wide range of topics. In rural areas, libraries often serve as their communities only no-fee internet connection and computing services. Libraries are important to Maine citizens.

As you are aware, the MLSA will reauthorize the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the only direct source of federal funding benefiting U.S. libraries. The stated mission of IMLS — to “inspire libraries to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement” — is crucial to the success of Maine’s libraries.

An improvement to MLSA addresses a needed adjustment to the base allotment to each State Library Administrative Agency, under the LSTA Grants to States Program. Our state partners and nearly 60,000 American Library Association members back this change. LSTA grants allow Maine to maintain local implementation of talking book services, which directly benefit persons who are blind, visually impaired, or physically handicapped by providing access to reading materials in alternate formats. There is no dedicated funding stream for these materials: LSTA grants fill this need for Maine citizens.

The MLA urges the Senate HELP Committee to pass S. 3530. We thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

The Maine Library Association Board