

Thank you to our Federal Legislators

Federal Budget Update

NJLA posted a legislative alert last week urging the library community to contact their federal representatives regarding funding for library services. In his budget proposal, President Trump calls for the elimination of two key programs which provide critical funds in NJ Libraries. The two programs are the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL).

Currently, the NJ State Library administers over 4 million dollars of federal funds in the LSTA program. This funding supports many statewide programs including the NJ Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC) which serves individuals unable to use traditional books and funding for many electronic resources which are available to all NJ libraries. It would be impossible to replace these programs with local funding.

The Innovative Approaches to Literacy program (IAL) is a competitive grant program which provides support for school media programs.

We want to thank all of you who took the time to contact your representatives. They heard your voices. Two separate “Dear Colleague” letters were recently circulated among the members of Congress. The first letter was to support Library Services and Technology Funding (LSTA) and the second was to support Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL).

The following members of Congress signed onto both letters:

Congressman Frank Pallone	(District 6)
Congressman Albio Sires	(District 8)
Congressman William Pascrell	(District 9)
Congressman Donald Payne	(District 10)
Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman	(District 12)

Signing onto the LSTA letter:

Congressman Chris Smith	(District 4)
Congressman Josh Gottheimer	(District 5)

Signing onto the IAL Letter:

Congressman Donald Norcross	(District 1)
Congressman Tom McArthur	(District 3)
Congressman Leonard Lance	(District 7)

Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen (District 11) is the chair of the House Appropriations Committee which will be drafting the final budget bill for a full vote in the House of Representatives. Traditionally, no member of this committee signs onto “Dear Colleague” letters since it is their responsibility to develop the final bill.

Please thank your representative for their support. This is only the first step in the federal budget process. It will be several months before the budget is finalized. We will contact you when additional advocacy on the federal budget is needed.