

Please ask the Representative/Senator to co-sponsor the Build America's Libraries Act (H.R. 1581 in the House / S. 127 in the Senate).

It's a bipartisan bill that would provide funding to construct and modernize public libraries in underserved communities, including an estimated \$22 million for libraries in Delaware.

ALA (American Library Association) suggests that Sen Carper may be interested in this as an Infrastructure project. Sen Carper is Chairman of the Senate Environment & Public Works (EPW) Committee.

Please also ask state and local public officials to lend their support for this with the Representative/Senators.

DRAFT – edit to your local situation --

Dear (Coons/Carper/Blunt Rochester)

I'm writing to ask for your support of the Build America's Libraries Act (H.R. 1581 / S. 127) to fund public library construction. It's a bipartisan bill that would provide funding to construct and modernize public libraries in underserved communities, including an estimated \$22 million for libraries in Delaware. Building infrastructure for DE Libraries has been a priority for over a decade, to construct the infrastructure of library buildings and library technologies which are connected (via a single network and catalog) statewide on behalf of Delawareans.

In Delaware, as you are aware, the state funds up to 50% of public library construction and the local community is required to raise the match. The program has worked well for Delaware in most instances. However, it has been particularly difficult to raise the match funding in low income communities, resulting in disparities in service in these areas. This is particularly a challenge for the nonprofit libraries.

For example, currently we are working with Secretary Jeff Bullock to establish a new library for the North Wilmington area. This new library will be an anchor for revitalization and economic development. The state will fund 50%, and the proposed federal library construction funding could serve as a match in this underserved area, and help propel future economic development.

Another example – the Harrington Public Library is still located in a small former funeral home. They've been approved for library construction funding from the state but had to postpone the project due to a severe costly sewage problem in the town. The funds that would be available through this bill would enable the library to be designed and built so Delawareans in that area could receive quality, professional library services to help them recover and thrive.

In response to COVID, strategic planning of Outdoor Library Spaces statewide has just been completed. DE Libraries are first in the nation to have plans that, with funding, could enable them to offer many library services outside, maximizing the use of space outside the library. The planning documents are available here <https://libraries.delaware.gov/planning-future/>

The Build America's Libraries Act funds would be immediately helpful for North Wilmington, Harrington, current library projects underway including Selbyville, Rehoboth, and Appoquinimink, and other DE library projects.

Thank you for your use and support of Delaware libraries!