

# Libraries as essential infrastructure

CHAPTERS' BRIEFING

MARCH 24, 2021

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## Agenda

- Context for Build America's Libraries Act
- Build America's Libraries Act provisions
- Build America's Libraries Act supporters
- Action items
- Resources
- Discussion

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## Context for Build America's Libraries Act

- ❖ On average, America's public libraries are 40 years old or more. Half the libraries Andrew Carnegie funded a century ago are still in use as libraries.
- ❖ At the federal level, Congress has not provided dedicated funding for library facilities since 1997.
- ❖ Nationally, public libraries have billions of dollars in assessed facilities needs.
- ❖ Infrastructure needs have been a bipartisan concern for much of the last decade, but major initiatives have not advanced recently. (Maybe soon?)

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## Build America's Libraries Act provisions

- ❖ \$5 billion to repair, modernize, and construct library facilities
- ❖ Legislation would fund upgrades to the nation's library infrastructure to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, broadband capacity, environmental hazards, and accessibility barriers
- ❖ Eligible facilities include public libraries, tribal libraries, and state libraries that provide service directly to the general public. Funding would be prioritized to libraries serving marginalized communities, such as high-poverty areas.
- ❖ Eligible uses include:
  - conducting facilities condition assessments, needs assessments, and master planning;
  - financing new library facilities; or
  - making capital improvements to existing library facilities, including buildings, grounds, and bookmobiles.

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## Build America's Libraries Act supporters

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S. 127: sponsored by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) and 10 co-sponsors

H.R. 1581: sponsored by Reps. Andy Levin (D-MI), Don Young (R-AK), and 72 co-sponsors

Named supporters include library organizations, local government associations, unions, and a range of associations representing architects, civil engineers and more

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## Key decisionmakers

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- ❖ Biden Administration
- ❖ Congressional leadership
- ❖ Key Congressional committees

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## Action items


### ❖ Stories and data to make the case

- Statewide needs assessments
- State capital funding
- Local needs assessments and master plans
- Success stories & horror stories

### ❖ Advocacy

- Contact your Members of Congress
- Op-eds & local media coverage
- Visits/virtual visits with Members of Congress
- Relationships

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EDITORIAL TOPICAL FEATURED

**OUR VIEW: Build America's Libraries Act could help McAlester**

McAlester News-Capital Editorial Board Mar 17, 2021

**Build Awareness of Library Needs & Impacts**



**Now is the time to rebuild our libraries**

By Jack Martin - March 5, 2021 1:18 am

f t in e p

**Federal proposal focused on building and renovating libraries**

by Roxanne Werly | Tuesday, March 9th 2021

We've all felt the impact of the past year – not being able to carry on with our lives normally, not socializing in person with family and friends, working from home or not working at all, navigating virtual school, not meeting at gathering places such as bars, theaters and libraries. Yes, even libraries! Libraries have...

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## Resources

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**Landing page:** [www.ala.org/advocacy/buildlibraries](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/buildlibraries)

**Social:** #BuildLibraries

**Key messages**

- Libraries are a crucial part of our nation's learning and social infrastructure.
- Many of our nation's libraries were built before the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the World Wide Web (1991), and the "maker" movement (2005). Our communities need modern libraries to meet today's needs.
- The Build America's Libraries Act would provide funding to construct and modernize public libraries across the country, creating jobs while revitalizing our communities.

**Real-time action alerts**

**Customizable templates**

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DISCUSSION!

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## Contacts

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