



*The Voice of the Library Community*

**New York Library Association**

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April 30, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Building  
Washington D.C 20510

Dear Senator Schumer,

On behalf of the New York Library Association, I am writing to respectfully request your support for the Build America's Libraries Act (S. 127), which would provide \$5 billion to renovate and construct public library buildings in underserved communities, to be included among investments to modernize our nation's infrastructure.

As New York works to recover from the lasting consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, public libraries will play crucial roles in helping students rebound from learning loss and supporting dislocated workers in finding and gaining skills needed to secure good-paying jobs. Yet too many of undersized, outdated, or ill-equipped to fully meet their communities' needs.

In New York, there are 757 public libraries with nearly 1,100 locations. Of these, nearly 400 are over 60 years old and 155 were built before 1900. Our libraries face significant needs for repair, renovation, and construction. In fact, the State Education Department's Division of Library Development has assessed more than \$1.5 billion in facility needs for our state's public libraries.

Currently, the cost and burden to maintain these critical public facilities falls entirely to local communities, with modest support from our state government. Congress has not provided federal funding for library facilities in 25 years. Unfortunately, despite the other significant investments proposed in President Biden's American Jobs Plan, our public library infrastructure was not included.

As Congress considers how to rebuild our public facilities, libraries must not be left out.

New York's library community was thrilled last year when you included \$5 billion in funding for library renovation and construction in the Economic Justice Act. We are looking forward to your leadership to ensure that funding is included when Congress acts on infrastructure this year.

Thank you for your visionary leadership to rebuild New York's libraries. If we can provide additional information, please contact myself or Briana McNamee, the Association's Director of Government Relations & Advocacy at [advocate@nyla.org](mailto:advocate@nyla.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Johannesen".

Jeremy Johannesen  
Executive Director  
New York Library Association