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Press Contact: Amber Billey, VLA President
Phone: 802-656-8568
Email: abilley@uvm.edu

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The [Vermont Library Association](#) joins [American Library Association](#) President Barbara Stripling in rebuking the budget plan by House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI). This budget plan seeks to eliminate federal funding for multiple programs dedicated to the public good that directly benefit Vermont libraries and their patrons.

Ryan's budget resolution effectively calls for the dissolution of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency that administers grants to libraries and museums, including the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) state funding program. In Vermont, LSTA funds represent approximately 25% of the state's \$3.8 million Department of Libraries budget for fiscal year 2014.

President Stripling writes, "Libraries depend on the support they receive from IMLS to help patrons learn new skills, find job opportunities and access reading materials that they otherwise could not afford. More than \$180 million has been appropriated to the Institute for Museum and Library Services through September 2014 to help libraries make information and services available to the citizens they serve. In Rep. Ryan's own state of Wisconsin, more than 65 percent of libraries report that they are the only free access point to Internet in their communities."

Vermont libraries serve the same critical role in ensuring equitable access to the Internet, books, and other educational materials. In Vermont LSTA funding has allowed libraries to create summer reading programs, offer adapted resources to blind and physically disabled patrons, provide Vermonters with reliable access to online databases, enhance public programs, train librarians, and much more.

The Vermont Library Association commends Vermont's Congressional delegation for their unanimous support for LSTA. Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders, and Congressman Welch all signed on to "Dear Colleague" letters in support of the program.

Ryan would like to make similar cuts in federal funding to agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts, Public Broadcasting Service, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), a move that would result in the loss of cultural heritage on an epic scale. In Vermont, the NEH has funded \$1,118,552 toward identifying and preserving nearly 1,000 historic Vermont newspaper titles through the Vermont Newspaper Project. Most recently NEH funded digitizing over 200,000 pages through the Vermont Digital Newspaper Project.

Vermont Library Association President Amber Billey says, “In a budget that also proposes the elimination of community block grants and the drastic reduction of anti-poverty measures such as food stamps, perhaps it should be no surprise to see such disregard for America’s libraries. Vermont’s most recent libraries statistics indicate widespread use of services – nearly 4 million visits to our facilities, over 20,000 public programs offered, and 4.5 million items such as books circulated. Paul Ryan’s budget would seriously impact our ability to provide these critical services to Vermonters.”

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