

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 324

Expressing support for the staff of this Nation’s public, school, academic, and special libraries and the essential services they provide to our communities, recognizing the need for funding commensurate with the broad scope of social services and community supports provided by libraries, preserving the right of all citizens to freely access information and resources in their communities, supporting a strong union voice for library workers, and defending the civil rights of library staff.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 25, 2023

Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BOWMAN, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CASAR, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. POCAN, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SCHOLTEN, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. HIGGINS of New York) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the staff of this Nation’s public, school, academic, and special libraries and the essential services they provide to our communities, recognizing the need for funding commensurate with the broad scope of social services and community supports provided by libraries, preserving the right of all citizens to freely access information and resources in their communities, supporting a strong union voice for library workers, and defending the civil rights of library staff.

Whereas the staff of the Nation's libraries are cornerstones of their communities, providing patrons with access to books and media, delivering high-quality programming to visitors of all ages, ensuring equitable internet access for all, and linking people to crucial information about accessing social services;

Whereas libraries are an economic powerhouse in their communities, providing resources to small business owners, job seekers, and individuals learning new skills;

Whereas, in recent years, the staff of the Nation's libraries have been called on to address the fallout from our most difficult public crises on a daily basis, taking on roles that exceed the traditional role of providing a space and access to educational and cultural enrichment;

Whereas library staff provide lifesaving care to members of their communities who are suffering the effects of the country's ongoing and tragic opioid epidemic, including being called upon to administer medication to treat overdoses;

Whereas libraries are a safe haven for individuals and families who are unhoused, and library workers provide the supportive community environment and resources needed by such individuals and families;

Whereas libraries are often the only source of internet for underserved communities;

Whereas library workers not only maintained the public's access to essential library services but also were relied on to distribute personal protective equipment and provide testing to the public during the worst days of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas libraries have met this expanded and intensified demand for community, public health, and safety net services often while contending with severe funding cuts, creating unsustainable and frequently unsafe working conditions for library workers;

Whereas the health of our country and survival of our democracy requires that everyone be able to exercise rights to information and services, and it is especially important for young people to have the opportunity to learn and encounter and debate all manner of ideas, including controversial ones;

Whereas library staff must make decisions about the books and media in their collections and assist patrons in accessing those materials as a fundamental responsibility of their job, without fearing censorship or reprisal for fulfilling their role in providing information and resources to the public;

Whereas, over the past year, there have been deplorable incidents throughout the country that have been orchestrated to intimidate library staff and prevent them from fulfilling their central work responsibility to provide the public with free and unfettered access to information;

Whereas library workers across the country are mobilizing for a collective union voice in their workplaces to elevate their profession, ensure safe and adequately resourced spaces that meet the needs of the communities they serve, and to protect the essential role of libraries in American democracy; and

Whereas the week of April 23 through April 29, 2023, would be an appropriate time to celebrate “National Library Week”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives com-
2 mends the work of the people who staff the Nation’s li-
3 braries, supports the goals and ideals of National Library
4 Week, and—

5 (1) recognizes that libraries and library workers
6 provide critical infrastructure for the United States
7 and are essential to the future of this country;

8 (2) supports the prioritization of full funding of
9 library services at the Federal, State, and local lev-
10 els, to ensure the continuation and improvement of
11 their services;

12 (3) reaffirms the fundamental right of the peo-
13 ple of the United States to access information, which
14 is made real through the efforts of the individuals
15 who staff the Nation’s libraries;

16 (4) reaffirms library workers’ fundamental right
17 to organize and collectively bargain at work and to
18 have a protected voice in their workplace;

19 (5) reaffirms the civil rights of library workers
20 to exercise their responsibilities to the public without
21 threats or intimidation; and

22 (6) recognizes the right of library workers to
23 speak out on matters of public concern, to address
24 themselves to elected officials and to the administra-
25 tion of the entities that employ such workers, and to

1 inform the public at large about their right to free
2 and unfettered access to information, and about
3 threats to such access.

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