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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

SEP 18 1984

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

I understand that you will be participating in the conference to reconcile the differences between H.R. 2878, a bill "To amend and extend the Library Services and Construction Act," (Act) as passed by the House of Representatives on January 31, 1984 and by the Senate on June 21, 1984. The Department of Education has opposed the reauthorization of the Library Services and Construction Act, believing that more than twenty-five years of Federal support to State and public libraries have largely accomplished the purposes of that Act. We believe that the time has come to shift the Federal role from large-scale direct support of public library services towards a leadership role exercised through analysis of library needs and the provision of technical assistance in the application of developing technologies. Scarce Federal resources should not be used to perpetuate programs that have already achieved their purpose. However, I am writing to express the Department's views on certain provisions of the House and Senate versions of the bill.

Section 15 of the House-passed bill would add a new Title V to the Act which would authorize a program of small grants (no larger than \$15,000) for the acquisition of foreign language materials and a new Title VI to the Act which would authorize a program of small grants (no larger than \$25,000) to support literacy programs. We are strongly opposed to the creation of new, separate, categorical programs of this type. Moreover, these separate program authorities are unnecessary; State and local public libraries may already acquire foreign language materials and conduct literacy programs with Federal funds under Title I of the Act.

Title III of the Senate-passed bill would reauthorize the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) through fiscal year 1989. We are opposed to Title III. We support continuing the activities of NAEP and NCES, but not as part of H.R. 2878. Although the authorization for NCES expires at the end of fiscal year 1984, an automatic extension for fiscal year 1985 is provided under the General Education Provisions Act. Moreover, the Department, consistent with past and current practice, has proposed to continue support for NAEP in fiscal year 1985 under the general authority of the National Institute of Education (NIE). The Department will present proposals for reauthorization of both NIE and NCES for fiscal year 1986.

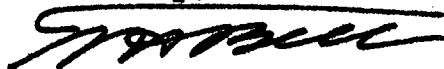
Title IV of the Senate-passed bill would authorize appropriations to construct or renovate three specific higher education facilities, and the House-passed bill would authorize appropriations to develop a specific institute for the study of public policy. Notwithstanding the merit of the specific projects at issue, we are opposed in principle to supporting programs such as these on other than a need-oriented, competitive basis. Similarly, we believe that including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs within the meaning of the term "Indian tribe" for purposes of the Library Services and Construction Act, as the Senate-passed bill does, establishes an unwise precedent, and therefore we oppose it as well.

Finally, Title II of the Senate-passed bill would authorize the Secretary to establish, through matching grants, an endowment program at Howard University similar to those available to other developing colleges under Title III of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The establishment of an endowment program at Howard University is an important administration proposal which, of course, we strongly support. This authority is necessary because Howard University receives a separate appropriation from the Federal Government and is therefore ineligible to receive endowment funds under Title III of the HEA. Enactment of Title II would stimulate non-Federal contributions to the University and enable it to reduce its heavy reliance on Federal support. With regard to authorization levels, the Department urges that \$2 million be authorized for fiscal year 1985 and "such sums" be authorized for subsequent fiscal years, thus providing the flexibility to pursue this promising approach further in future years, if warranted.

We urge you to bear the Department's concerns in mind during the House and Senate conference on H.R. 2878, and to be equally mindful of the severe fiscal constraints with which we must all contend.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's programs.

Sincerely,



T. H. Bell