



**MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA**  
CITY OF LONG BEACH

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
728 Hart, Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Support for the Build America's Libraries Act**

Dear Senator Reed,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I write in support of S. 127, the Build America's Libraries Act. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant fiscal strain on the public library system in Long Beach, leading to delays in much-needed infrastructure and facility improvements. The \$5 billion in investments proposed in the Build America's Libraries Act would help to ensure accessibility and core library services in historically marginalized communities.

The Long Beach Public Library (LBPL) is a recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service and proudly offers free, equal access to workforce development assistance, learning resources, and digital technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the fundamental role libraries play in our community. Many Long Beach residents rely on our libraries to access essential services like the Internet. Closing libraries to the public during the pandemic has left many community members without resources to support distance learning, facilitate employment opportunities, and advance early education and literacy.

While facility closures have been necessary to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the library system has been quick to offer resources during the emergency, including a virtual summer reading program to promote literacy, virtual story times, podcasts that feature Long Beach history and recommended reading, expanded e-books and online resources for enrichment, and video game development workshops to advance youth creativity. Library staff have also been redeployed as contact tracers, digital navigators to answer questions and coordinate laptop and hotspot distribution, and provide assistance for seniors and vaccine information via phone centers—all to assist with our City's COVID-19 response. Our library also established LBPL To-Go, a contactless pick-up service allowing residents to continue to access materials during the State and local public health orders.

The City supports grant programs that provide funding for library construction, renovation, and development to increase the quality of life for Long Beach residents. Several of our library facilities require significant infrastructure improvements to maintain the LBPL's award-winning service, and the grants proposed by the Build America's Libraries Act would help invest in our libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Garcia", written over a white background.

Mayor Robert Garcia  
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Senator Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Senator Alex Padilla  
The Honorable Congressman Alan Lowenthal, 47<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Congressmember Nanette Barragan, 44<sup>th</sup> District