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House of Representatives

Investing in Our Museums and Libraries

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Hinojosa) for his leadership on something that is so important to America, and that is, the Museum and Library Services Act.

As my colleague has pointed out, this bill authorizes \$245 million in Federal assistance for museums and libraries in the coming fiscal year and additional funds all the way through the end of this decade.

A civilized society, Mr. Speaker, must include cultural enrichment, and it is one of the responsibilities of our government to support that aspect of our civilization. We get what we pay for. Thanks to our museums and libraries, our citizens become well-rounded individuals, and our children are encouraged to become the best that they can be.

Let me highlight for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, a few of the success stories that come out from the Library Services and Technology Act, which is a part of the Museum and Library Services Act, in my home State of California.

The Infopeople project provides training and computers for local libraries, assuring public access to the Internet in 530 of our State's 765 public libraries.

The University of California in San Diego is assisting over 100 libraries and cultural institutions to recover from natural and man-made disasters.

The County of Los Angeles Public Library is training college students to assist with the library's Summer Reading Program for Children, providing work experience for students while helping open the door to reading for over 30,000 of our children.

The Family Literacy Program provides programs and books for infants and children.

The Oceanside Public Library in San Diego County provides health information from a mobile vehicle funded through this Act.

From my own congressional district, in the city of National City, one of the poorest cities in California, but blessed with a great city librarian, Anne Campbell, this city has funded a large community computer center in the National City Public Library. Over 50,000 residents each year have access to electronic information, software programs, Internet and training. Residents are working on job resumes, e-mailing a loved one aboard a Navy ship, running a business, preparing reports for school and 1,000 other uses that we know that the Internet can provide.

Currently, a grant from this Act provides Web page design training for high school students, with real life experiences designing Web sites for local businesses and nonprofit organizations. From the first class, already two students have been hired permanently to continue to update these Web sites. So the digital divide of which we hear a lot has been narrowed in National City because of the LSTA.

We can go on for a long time about the stories. These are just a few, but they would not be possible without our investment in our Nation's libraries.

I urge support of this legislation, and I thank the gentleman for yielding.

