

**Transcript: Libraries and Broadband: Introduction, Opening Statement, and Welcoming Remarks
April 17, 2014**

DIRECTOR REYES-GAVILAN: Good morning and welcome to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. My name is Richard Reyes-Gavilan, and I am the Executive Director of the District of Columbia Public Library. It is my honor to welcome you all to the library this morning to join our distinguished guests for this important public hearing on the evolving and growing need for broadband access in America's libraries. So libraries have been talking for years about bridging the digital divide and I think that phrase has been around as long as I've been working in libraries which is about 20 years now, if not longer. I have to admit something -- that about seven or eight years ago, I started getting kind tired of this phrase "the digital divide." My feeling was that the issue was increasingly less about bridging the digital divide and more about bridging the digital skills divide. In other words, it was less about providing access and more about providing the literacy necessary once access was attained. I'll also admit that I was wrong. In many ways, the digital divide is as big as it's ever been and that's really because so much of the world has moved exclusively online, and those of us who haven't are really at an increasing risk. So seven or eight years ago, you could apply for most jobs without being online. You can't do that today. Seven or eight years ago, you could easily communicate with your child's teacher without being online. You can't do that as easily today. Seven or eight years ago, you could apply for health insurance without being online. Seven or eight years ago, you could take the high school equivalency examination without being online. None of this possible now without reliable high-speed access and public libraries remain the very best option to level the playing field. I know that's true because of the incredible success that the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program has had across the country here and at my previous job at the Brooklyn Public Library, just amazing, amazing things, making great strides not only improving the infrastructure to support public computing but addressing that digital skills divide that I was mentioning as well. But BTOP is over and many of us are wondering how do we build on the incredible success of that program and where is the additional funding going to come from. So I should take a moment on the other end of the digital literacy spectrum to talk to you a bit about the room in which we're sitting. This is our digital commons, a space that opened up last summer. In addition to providing basic internet access, it provides access to an increasingly sophisticated set of tools like the Adobe Creative Suite and the Espresso Book Printing Machine that require even faster connectivity. This room really is the true embodiment of public libraries serving the broad continuum of adult learning needs across the city, but it wasn't cheap. It cost somewhere around 3 or 4 million dollars. How can build more of them because we know the need is there. So I'm hoping that our panel will talk a little bit about some of this stuff. Anyway, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce to you Susan Hildreth, the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Susan really has done, I think, so much in her tenure to elevate libraries in the public consciousness and we all owe her a really amazing debt of gratitude, and we'll be sorry to see her go. But Susan, please. Thank you.

(Applause)

DIRECTOR HILDRETH: Thank you. All right. I'd ask our gentlemen, the two Toms, if you wouldn't mind joining me here on the stage. Good morning, everyone. Well, it is so wonderful to be here. So first of all, welcome, everyone. This event is being recorded and will be made available to the public, so everybody

keep that in mind as we have our exciting dialogue here. It is my pleasure to convene the Institute of Museum and Library Services Hearing on Libraries and Broadband, and I'm doubly excited because we're having this great event during National Library Week. Hooray Library Week! Woo- hoo!

(Applause)

DIRECTOR HILDRETH: And first, I want to thank our host, the DC Public Library. We couldn't have a better venue for this event than the Digital Commons where connectivity and learning come alive. Just take a look over there. This building just opened up and this place is packed with people using these resources. So this is what it's all about. The issue we are discussing today is of great importance to the millions of Americans who use broadband at the Nation's 17,000 public libraries as well as those who use broadband at home to access library resources. Every day, children, teens and adults use broadband at their local library to further their education, find workforce and health information, seek digital literacy training and much more. So today I am very proud to be joined by members of the National Museum and Library Services Board and they're with me here on podium: Charles Benton of Illinois, Christie Brandau of Iowa, Carla Hayden of Maryland, and Winston Tabb of Maryland. The board provides policy advice to IMLS. We're also fortunate to have another Board member in the audience, John Coppola, who comes from the museum side of the house, and I see some museum faces out there, so hi, museums. We love you, too. And we're also honored to have David Ferriero with us, the Archivist of the United States, and we also -- there he is. Hello, David, and he's got a lot of content, that guy does. And we're excited to have the past President of American Library Association here today, Maureen Sullivan. So thank you for being with us today. This is really the first time that IMLS has used its statutory authority to advise the President, Congress and the other federal agencies on library, museums and information services and also to hold public hearings. This authority was provided to IMLS during the 2010 Reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act which incorporated into the IMLS law responsibilities that were previously held by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. We chose this moment to use this new authority because this is a moment full of potential. We are encouraged that Tom Wheeler, the Federal Communications Commission Chairman is working actively to modernize the E-Rate, an important source of telecommunications discounts for libraries and schools. And considering the analysis of FCC data that IMLS just released yesterday, this moment is perhaps of even great importance than many of us may have realized. Our analysis shows that a total of 15,551 individual libraries have used the discounts provided by the E-Rate. Now this actual number varies from year- to-year. However, in looking at 11 years worth of data that we had, we found that the annual participation rate ranged from 67 to 73 percent of all the libraries in the U.S., so we are taking advantage of this program. The E-Rate was created 17 years ago when the first overhaul of the Telecommunications Act in 62 years was passed in 1996. This is the same year that the Museum and Library Services Act was first enacted creating IMLS and in a move that recognized the importance of technology in the library world changed the Library and Services Construction Act, and some people do miss that but we moved on to the Library Services and Technology Act, LSTA. Through LSTA, IMLS supports statewide initiatives and national priorities to help public, academic, college, tribal and school libraries serve the public, especially targeting library services to individuals with geographic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds -- we help diverse people -- to individuals with disabilities, individuals of

limited functional literacy or information skills. And from its creation, IMLS has recognized the importance of a connected society and the library's unique leadership role as a hub for our digital world. We're again at a crucial moment where the intersection of emerging technologies and delivering broadband services and the needs of library professionals and library customers meet. I'd like to note for the record that the National Broadband Plan issued four years ago recommended affordable access to at least one gigabit per second broadband service to anchor institutions, including libraries, a very laudable goal. The FCC, through its recent efforts to modernize the E-Rate Program, the President's own ConnectED initiative and the recent grants through the Broadband Technology Opportunities -- the BTOP program demonstrate a national commitment and sense of urgency around high-speed internet delivery and the opportunity for innovation that access provides for our communities. Public access to technology and to content is dependent on high-speed internet delivery. We know that one-third of all Americans, 100 million people have not adopted broadband high-speed internet at home for a variety of reasons, and we also know that 19 million do not have access at all. This has a dramatic impact on the capacity of public libraries to serve those left out of the benefits of full participation in a digital world and the recent economic recession bears this out. As millions of Americans flocked to public libraries to access workforce development and information on economic opportunities, our libraries continued their well-established role as community anchors. We know that America's jobseekers headed to their trusted institutions during this challenging time, often relying on the library's internet connection to search for work or sharpen their skills. We also know that more than 80 percent of the Fortune 500 companies today require online job applications. To realistically succeed in today's society, you need the internet. There can be no doubt that the speed of internet connections matter and are critical to making good on delivering the services and information our communities need. As a federal agency with a public service mission, IMLS has a unique vantage point. We are here to better understand how to best serve the public interest. We're not here to support one path forward but instead to provide an opportunity for a public hearing to examine a variety of points of view. And we look forward to hearing from our great lineup of panelists representing rural, tribal and urban perspectives. We will examine the broad public benefits of library broadband, analyze data on broadband use at public libraries and hear about solutions that will bring high-speed internet access to libraries. So thank you very much and we'll now begin with a wonderful welcome by FCC Chairman, Tom Wheeler. It gives me great pleasure to introduce the current FCC Chairman, Thomas Wheeler, who has graciously taken time to start things off for us this morning. We appreciate that so much. For over three decades, Chairman Wheeler has been involved with new telecommunications networks and services experiencing the revolution in telecommunications as policy expert, an advocate and a businessman. As an entrepreneur, he started or helped start multiple companies offering innovative cable, wireless and video communication services. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, Chairman Wheeler has made it clear that he understands the importance and role of libraries. With his vast and diverse background in telecommunications and emerging technological issues, we are very fortunate to have him here with us today. Please welcome Tom Wheeler.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN WHEELER: Thank you very much, Susan, and to the members of the Board. Nice to see you all here. This is something very important and congratulations to the Institute of Library and Museum Services for convening and for having this idea to help get this message out. You know, Susan and everybody there, I'm privileged to share the podium today with my friend, Tom Power, from the Whitehouse who has been a leading pusher, advocate for the kinds of changes that we have to be making to make sure that we're bringing the E- Rate Program into the 21st Century. And I'm also joined by a couple of my colleagues who are intimately involved in this, Jonathan Chambers and Daniel Alvarez. And when you look for fingerprints on what the FCC is doing in terms of E-Rate reform, you'll find John and Dan's fingerprints all over it. But there are also two other very important people in this audience, and I think that their presence here today creates a construct for how we can discuss things: Chairman Reed Hundt. I have the august responsibility of following Reed's footsteps as Chairman of the FCC and while there are many names that inevitably get attached to the E-Rate Program, the present at creation Seminole name associated with that is Reed Hundt. There would be no E-Rate Program without Reed Hundt and that is just a factual statement. (Applause) CHAIRMAN WHEELER: The Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero is also here and as Susan said, he's got more goodies in his house down on Pennsylvania Avenue than anyplace else. And over the years, I've been privileged to hang around a lot of those goodies and hang around David. He's a library guy to begin with, folks. He was stolen from the New York Public Library where he was running that great institution. But what he's done at the National Archives is to open up the National Archives and so much of that concept of opening up means digitization. And I want to give you a personal example of why what Reed and David have enabled can be transformative. I wrote a couple of books on the Civil War and the most recent was about Abraham Lincoln's use of the telegraph. And thank goodness, at the National Archives, there sit Abraham Lincoln's handwritten telegrams. You know, the Spielberg movie was a fabulous movie but they got the telegraph office scene wrong. Lincoln did not dictate his telegrams. He wrote them out in longhand. And thank God he did and thank God they're saved at the National Archives because it becomes a one degree of separation. When you hold in your white-gloved hand the piece of paper that Abraham Lincoln wrote on, there's one degree of separation that you feel from Abraham Lincoln, and that is a privilege that a few researchers, like I was privileged to have, get. But what David has done is to digitize all of those documents, not only the telegrams but the other great holdings of the National Archives so that there's one click between someone who wants to explore and Abraham Lincoln. It used to be -- when I started my research on Lincoln's telegrams, I was using the microfilm copies of his telegrams. And I'd get | this -- you know, we've all -- look, Susan's going "oh, we all know that" -- you'd get this canister and you'd sit down at this clunky machine and you would go through each microfilm picture one-by-one. Now thanks to David, you can click and it's there. So because people like David Ferrerio digitized the product, the information and because people like Reed Hundt made that digitized information available, that's why the work that we're talking about here today in terms of the importance of libraries is so incredibly key to what gets done because, you know, as we're sitting in this room here, we're moving from stacks of books to online centers. The library has always been the on- ramp to the world of information and ideas and now that on- ramp is at gigabyte speeds. But you know, as you all know, and as I am seeing as I travel across the country, libraries are playing a more and more and more important role in our communities as was pointed out earlier. It's where Americans without computers go to get online. It's where students after school go to get online. It's where Americans go to apply for their VA benefits or

apply for their healthcare or apply for their job. And it's where librarians end up being the guide at the side as people make these kinds of digital explorations. As a history buff, of course, I've always been interested in the role that Andrew Carnegie played in the library history of America. And one of the things that -- everybody always things Andrew Carnegie, steel. Andrew Carnegie was first a network guy. Andrew Carnegie started as a telegraph operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad. And as a matter of fact, he was brought here during the Civil War and was responsible for stringing the telegraph line that went out towards Manassas. He didn't make to Manassas before the battle but what we know -- what Abraham Lincoln knew about what was going on at the Battle of First Manassas was as a result of Andrew Carnegie's work. So it's appropriate that we're talking about libraries, about Carnegie's contribution in making libraries what they were in the 19th Century and we come back to networks. And that's why E-Rate modernization is so important. You know, the program that we have is called the Schools and Libraries Program. We need also start calling it the libraries and schools program to make sure that we recognize and emphasize the important contribution of each of those institutions. So what are we doing? We're moving from supporting 20th Century technology to 21st Century high-speed broadband technology. It's a reallocation of resources. Reallocations of resources are never easy and never pleasant but they're essential if we're to keep pushing forward. We're moving to broadband to the person at the library. It's not just the external connection but it's how do you get using wifi to the individual in the library. We're bringing the application and administrative process into the 21st Century as well by using the same kind of broadband tools and we're focusing on fiscal responsibility. The key is not just more money although if more money is warranted, we will deal with that. But the key is money well spent by encouraging consortia, by creating longer support periods so you can have longer contracts with lower rates, and by establishing a system of reference pricing so that people know what is a fair process, because we don't expect librarians to be telecom experts and be able to go out there and haggle with telecom companies -- so how do we help in that regard -- and also to have limited pilot programs that test new approaches that could benefit all. So, Susan, we're really grateful to you and to IMLS for launching this dialogue today. The timing is perfect. Our public notice is out now and we will shortly be releasing our plan for 2015 and forward. There is an incredible distinguished list of participants that you have lined up today. But I want to just return -- before I sit down, I want to return to the historical roots here for a second. Andrew Carnegie built 2500 libraries in a public-private partnership in the 19th Century. He defined information access for millions and millions of people for over a century. We stand on the precipice of being able to have the same kind of Seminole impact on the flow of information and ideas the 21st Century. That's why the work that you all are doing is so important. That's why the reform and modernization of the E-Rate Program is so essential. And that's why today's hearing and the kinds of topics that you're going to explore are so helpful to those of us who are trying to work on just how do we seize on this incredible moment of historic significance. Thank you for all that you're doing.

MS. HILDRETH: Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. HILDRETH: Thank you so much, Chairman Wheeler. That was inspiring and I just have to say that I know librarians don't particularly want to haggle with telecom folks but we haggle with everything that

we do. We do a pretty good job. So librarians out there, are we pretty good hagglers? Woo-hoo, all right! Just to set the record straight. Also, we're excited to have Chris Jowaisas coming to speak soon from the Gates Foundation and I have to say, the Gates Foundation, when I talk about Andrew Carnegie, and I often talk about Andrew Carnegie when I speak, I also characterize Bill and Melinda Gates and the Gates Foundation as our 21st Century Andrew Carnegie. So libraries have been very lucky to have these wonderful public-private partnerships over the years. So, I am now very pleased to introduce Thomas Power, the Chief of Staff of the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, who is currently on detail to the Office of Science and Technology Policy at the White House as Deputy Chief Technology Officer for Telecommunications. Mr. Power provides managerial and policy support for a wide range of agency activities including internet policymaking, spectrum and Recovery Act broadband grants program and was one of the first individuals who really encouraged us to get -- to have this hearing and make it happen. So, welcome, Tom.

(Applause)

MR. POWER: Thank you, Susan. Good morning, everybody and thank you, Board. Thank you, IMLS, for having this hearing. It's a real thrill to share the dais with Chairman Wheeler. I think he's one of my favorite -- maybe my favorite policy person in DC. He's doing such a great job. Well, second favorite. I mean I do work in the White House.

(Laughter)

MR. POWER: You never know who's watching?

(Laughter)

MR. POWER: So, you know, we're really trying to help here through the ConnectED program and the E-Rate Program and Chairman Wheeler has identified some of the ways forward. But we really recognize that the work, the real work happens at the local level, in the libraries, at IMLS and the other organizations represented here. So, you know, my main message this morning is just to thank you for all the work you do. For some of us, this is kind of personal. I can tell you that my mother, for 40 years, was an elementary school teacher and then the librarian at the school. And when she retired, the local newspaper in our little hometown came and did a little article about her and said -- one of the questions was "How have kids changed in 40 years?" And she said, "Well, you know, kids are kids. They don't change much but one thing that has changed is that parents seem to have lost some focus on the idea that kids need to come to school prepared to learn. The school is not just the island where education can happen and then when they leave the island, the education stops. The whole community has to be focused on education. It's the home. It's the school and it's the library." And that's why the work of the libraries is so important. I don't have to tell you that. It's a real community effort. And we learned this through the BTOP program at NTIA where I served for a couple of years before moving over to the White House. We found that the strongest grant applications were the ones that had the whole support of the community, the library, the school, the business community, the mayor or the city council, the county, the governor. The ones where we saw the community coming together to support the application were the ones we knew had the best chance of succeeding and we're really proud of the

work that BTOP did. My pal Gwenn Weaver's out in the audience and if you get a chance shake her hand or hug her if she'll let you or high five her maybe. She and the team over there did such a great job with the libraries in particular. BTOP connected over 1300 libraries to ultrafast broadband greatly increasing their bandwidth to meet the increasing demands of their patrons. BTOP has created or upgraded public computer centers in over 2000 library locations across the country installing thousands of new work stations. And I'm very pleased to announce that today, NTIA is going to be releasing three case studies published by an independent evaluation contractor that NTIA hired on the positive improvements and effects that the BTOP program is having in three library systems in particular. As you'll see, you can go on the NTIA website today to pull this down. In Delaware, 420 previously unemployed people received job offers after using the new job centers at four public libraries managed by the Delaware Department of Libraries. In Michigan, new public computer center facilities are estimated to have saved users more than 160,000 hours per year of wait time. And in Texas, public computer centers, including over 120 library locations, have provided nearly 850,000 training hours to support digital literacy enabling people to search for jobs and housing online, connect with their family in other countries and all the other important uses that Chairman Wheeler referred to. So we'll be putting that blog up today and the case studies. You should take a look at that. We know there's more to be done and we know the needs of the libraries. I read a statistic that 60 percent of libraries report that they are the only source of free internet access in their communities. And we've all seen that image, right, "the library's closed" and the kids are on the steps sucking on that wifi if they can get it through the wall, right, people out in the car with the heater going trying to connect. So, you know, you can look at that as glass half full, kind of discouraging because it means the library's aren't getting the resources they need to be open. But, you know, I try to be encouraged by that because we're stimulating demand. We've got the toehold in there. We've got the kids and the adults on those steps and in the cars and that's a good sign. And as you'll hear today, millions of Americans are using the internet at their local libraries to study for degrees or certificates, apply for jobs, develop new professional skills and participate in civic affairs. I think libraries are truly centers of lifelong learning and, of course, they're available to all regardless of age and income or disability. As Chairman Wheeler said, for folks who don't have computers at home, they're just essential but even for folks who do have computers at home, if you're trying to study, if you're trying to do certain tasks, maybe the home environment isn't always the best place to do it. We know librarians are good at keeping things on the QT and quiet and a good place for concentration for kids. So thanks for maintaining the civility there. I started by telling you about my mother, so I'm going to finish telling you about her mother who is my grandmother. She was a teacher and then a head mistress and then she retired. And she got a little bored and she went back to teaching. She retired again. She began a tutor and she gave her last tutoring lesson on her 90th birthday, decided that was enough. She never took a dime for her tutoring. She just wanted to teach and the joy of teaching was all the compensation she wanted. A few weeks ago, I was visiting with a cousin of mine who remembered my grandmother and she said, you know, one thing I remember was people would come to your grandmother's house. She had books all over the place and if a child was with the visitors, the child would always leave with a present and the present was always a book. And my grandmother would present it in a way that, you know, some kids, Christmastime, birthday, they get a book, they're not so thrilled -- my grandmother had this way of presenting a book to a child and the child thought they had gone to Disneyland. She just had this enthusiasm that just suffused everything and had a lot of books. They totally diminished over

the years as she gave them away. She loved sharing them especially with kids because she knew what my mom observed which is we need to all be in this together, education is not just in the school, it's at the home, it's at the library, it's the entire community. So Chairman Wheeler and I and those of us in Washington, all started with Chairman Hundt -- as Tom said, We're going to keep doing what we can do here but we are really depending on you. We know how hard you're working to make things happen at the local level. We're going to support you because we know it takes all of us to make this effort a success. Thanks for having me here and have a great day. Thank you.

(Applause)

DIRECTOR HILDRETH: Okay. Well, thank you, gentlemen. That was a great way to start and I'll ask our Panel Number One, Chris Jowaisas and Clarence Anthony, to join me here on the podium. First of all, I'd like to say thank you very much to Chairman Wheeler and to Tom Power for being with us. That was -- we're just really honored.