

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2007

HONOR YOUR LIBRARIANS ON NATIONAL LIBRARY WORKERS' DAY

BECOME A CO-SPONSOR OF THE LIBRARIAN ACT OF 2007

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to cosponsor the "Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need (LIBRARIAN) Act of 2007," which provides Perkins loan forgiveness to help recruit and retain librarians in schools and public libraries located in low-income areas. The introduction of this legislation is timely since today marks National Library Workers Day.

Our nation's public and school libraries are an invaluable part of our communities. Together they offer free and affordable access to education, skills training and information. In rural and low income areas, libraries are particularly important because they provide these valuable services that are sometimes scarce.

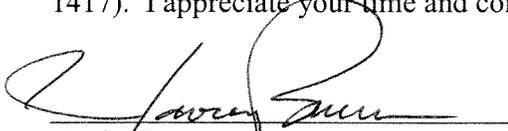
Unfortunately, these important institutions are quickly losing their most valuable resource: their librarians. Over the next four years, 25 percent of currently working librarians will retire. There are simply not enough young people training in the library sciences to fulfill this much needed role in our schools and communities. Librarians are highly trained, requiring specialized preparation and masters' degrees. However, the increasing costs of higher education and librarian salaries that can start as low as \$22,000 have caused many workers to choose other professions that require similar skills.

Specifically, the bill allows Perkins loan cancellation for full-time librarians with a master's degree in library sciences that are employed in (1) a public library that serves a geographic area that contains one or more schools eligible for Title I funding; or (2) an elementary or secondary school library that is eligible for Title I funding. Librarians working full-time in these areas would qualify for up to 100 percent Perkins loan forgiveness depending on the years of service.

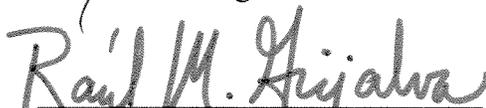
Current law already provides for the cancellation of educational loans for a number of categories of professionals that serve in low-income areas. Librarians should be included. This bill, supported by the American Library Association, addresses the critical shortage in our nation's libraries that is harming the long term opportunities of our most vulnerable students and communities.

If you have any questions or would like to become a co-sponsor, please contact Wendy Ramirez at (6-1417). I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress


Vernon Ehlers
Member of Congress


Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress


John Shimkus
Member of Congress