

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for the strong bipartisan support that the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee has provided to our local public broadcasting stations through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Ready To Learn program, and public media's interconnection system. As you craft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we request that you maintain this legacy and continue to support strong funding for these critical programs.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Objectivity and balance and diversity of thought in public broadcasting are essential to serving the public interest and preserving the public's trust. That's why in the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, Congress authorized the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation wholly independent of the federal government, to steward the federal government's investment in public media. This structure shields content decisions from political influence and the statute compels CPB to uphold "strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of programs of a controversial nature."

For more than 50 years, Congress has provided funding for the CPB with strong bipartisan support. Since 1976, Congress provides such funding as a two-year advance appropriation, serving as a firewall that protects public media's independence from politically motivated interference. It makes possible the long-term planning required to ensure public media's educational and public affairs programming meets the highest academic and journalistic standards and has become the bedrock for CPB's longstanding public-private partnership in service to all Americans.

Federal funding for the CPB is the foundation of public media's national-local, public-private partnership. Distributed according to a statutory formula, CPB's administrative expenses are capped at 5% and approximately 70% of all CPB's two-year advance are distributed to eligible public media stations. CPB funds more than 1,500 public television and radio stations across the country, supporting approximately 20,000 local jobs, and representing the only locally licensed, controlled, and directed media in America. With CPB funding, public media reaches nearly

99.7% percent of the American population living in rural, small town, and urban communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four commonwealths and territories. Every \$1 of federal funding contributing to that programming, generates \$7 from local sources — a tremendous return on the taxpayer investment.

This federal funding is critical to the work of all local public broadcasting stations to provide essential services and programming to local communities; enable local journalism that address current issues in an objective, fair, and balanced manner; facilitate local public safety and emergency alert services, and support educational services to millions of students, teachers, parents and caregivers. Unlike commercial media, public media operates under a unique statutory mandate to serve the public interest, focusing on educational and cultural enrichment and public safety, not profit.

Without federal support for public broadcasting, many localities would struggle to receive timely, reliable local news and educational content, especially remote and rural communities that commercial newsrooms are increasingly less likely to invest in. In states such as Alaska, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Texas, rural public radio stations are often the *only* weekly or daily news source in their communities. Even in places with other daily or weekly news sources, those outlets may not be directing resources toward original or locally based stories, leaving it to public stations to fill the gap.

We request level funding of \$535 million for CPB’s two-year advance.

Public Safety

Covering nearly 99 percent of the U.S. population, public broadcasting stations play an irreplaceable role as an emergency response tool that states and localities depend on.

Public television stations provide critical redundancy through the PBS Warning, Alert, and Response Network (PBS WARN) which sends geo-targeted Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) messages issued by more than 1,600 local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal authorities from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to cellular carriers, all along public media infrastructure. Between January 1, 2023, and January 1, 2024, nearly 8,500 WEAs were issued by federal, state, and local authorities and transmitted over the PBS WARN system. Additionally, National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Radio Satellite System enable local public radio stations to issue text and image alerts and other information to mobile phones, “connected car” smart dashboards, HD radios, and online streams. In fact, NPR has been named as a resource in at least 20 states’ emergency plans, for example, in Florida, “The National Test will be relayed to the three Primary Entry Point stations in Florida: WOKV (690 AM) – Jacksonville, WFLF (540 AM) – Orlando, WAQI (710 AM) – Miami.” Natural disasters do not stay within the lines of human-drawn state borders – that is why it's imperative that federal emergency communications coordinated through the CPB-funded PBS WARN and Public Radio Satellite System are able to get comprehensive information to those at risk in real time.

In addition to transmitting emergency alerts, public radio stations provide flexible, live coverage of emergencies and connect lifesaving information to first responders and residents during

unfolding events. During Hurricanes Helene and Milton, even as many other news sources lost power and internet, Blue Ridge Public Radio remained online in the Asheville, North Carolina area and delivered hourly local updates and statements from public officials to the more than 500,000 people impacted by power outages in the region. In Florida, a network of 14 public media stations across the state began coverage of Hurricane Helene a week before its major landfall, granting residents direct access to real-time weather alerts and updates across all platforms and apps. In Texas, Houston Public Media was able to utilize its over-the-air signal to connect first responders and residents in the Gulf Coast region with lifesaving information during the May Derecho and Hurricane Beryl last year.

Without public media, the federal and state governments would have to decide between funding replacement emergency alerting systems or forgo ensuring that all residents have access to life-saving information. For rural communities, large expanses and low population density would raise substantial financial barriers.

Education

Public broadcasting networks also support educational content that parents nationwide rely on to help their children learn, averaging 16 million monthly users and more than 350 million monthly streams across digital platforms. Public media is committed to providing education services to all Americans. Public broadcasting allows people at all income levels and from all parts of the country—rural and urban—to have access to consistent, high-quality, educational content for free.

Through a unique partnership among the U.S. Department of Education, CPB, and PBS, the Ready To Learn program funds the development of educational television and digital media targeted at preschool and early elementary school children and their families. More than 100 studies have demonstrated that this program’s research-based content builds and improves the early literacy and math skills for children, ages two to eight. For the majority of American children (60% in 2020) who don’t have the means or opportunity to attend preschool, Ready To Learn content provides an essential “school readiness” experience.

We are requesting level funding of \$31 million in FY 2026 to continue the impact of Ready to Learn created content and the scope of local station outreach to the kids, families, teachers, and schools that need it most.

Community Connection

Local public broadcasting stations are some of the last locally controlled and locally operated media in the country, especially in more rural and remote areas. The local focus of the stations builds civic leadership, strengthens the fabric of our local communities, and ensures that invaluable culture and unique local voices are preserved for generations to come.

For example, West Virginia Public Broadcasting partners with educators and local libraries in Boone County to deliver high-quality early childhood education to area children, setting them up for future success. The station also produces its broadcast music program, Mountain Stage, showcasing local and regional music that is distributed by NPR for a national audience. Across

the country, South Dakota Public Broadcasting is streaming state legislative meetings, making state government accessible to every South Dakotan. These services serve state interests, often saving states money by offering higher quality services at lower costs.

Interconnection

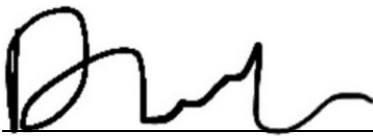
All of these services depend on public broadcasting's interconnection system – the satellite and digital infrastructure and supporting operations that provide every local public media station across the country with access to programming from national, regional, and independent content providers and the capability to share their local content with others. This system ensures that cellular customers can receive geo-targeted emergency alerts and warnings, enabling public media to be the fail-safe for reliable public safety services, even when power grids and internet services are down.

Level funding of \$60 million in FY 2026 for the interconnection system is essential to support its system-wide infrastructure while also efficiently address growing needs in the system, including: cybersecurity, content delivery networks, and data management, among others.

We urge you to continue your support for our nation's local public broadcasting stations with level funding of \$535 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's two-year advance, level funding of \$31 million for the Ready To Learn grant program, and level funding of \$60 million for public broadcasting Interconnection.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important request.

Sincerely,



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



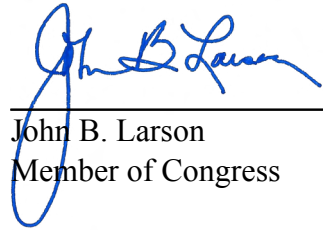
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



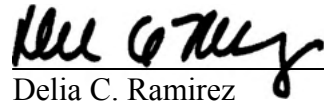
Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



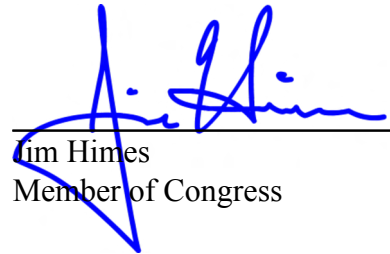
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



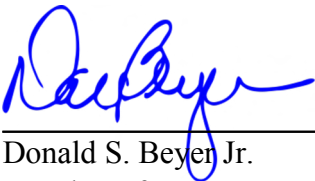
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



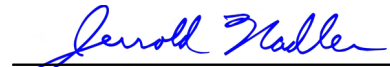
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Terrold Nadler
Member of Congress



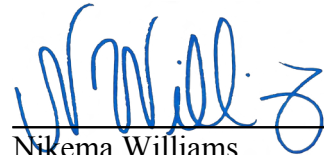
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



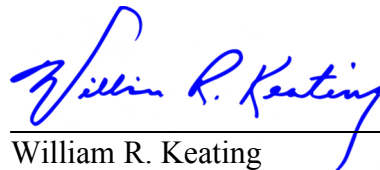
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress




Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress




Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



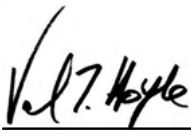
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



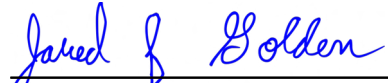
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



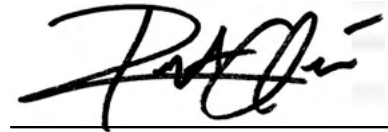
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



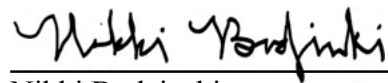
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



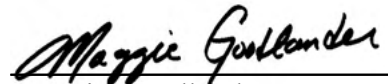
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



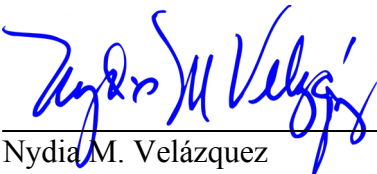
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



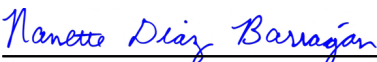
Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



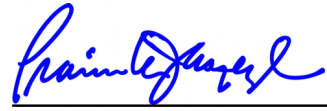
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



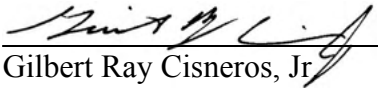
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



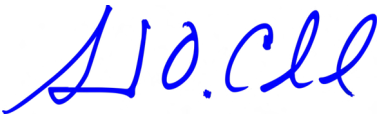
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



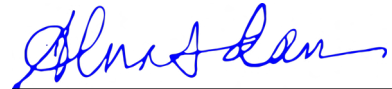
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



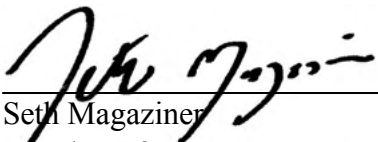
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



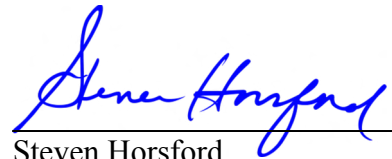
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



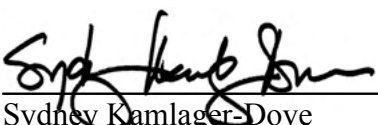
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



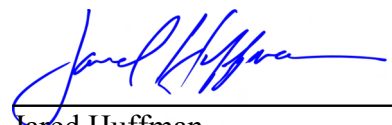
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



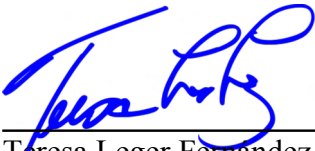
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
Nevada's Fourth
Congressional District



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



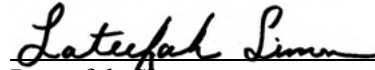
Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Josh Riley
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



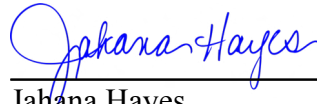
Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



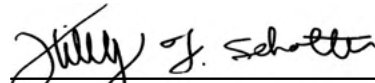
Dave Min
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress




Ami Bera
Member of Congress



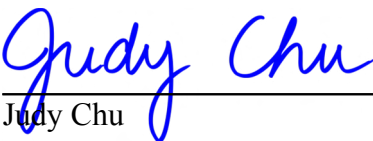
Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



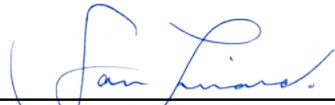
Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



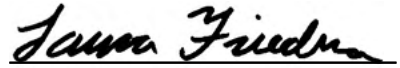
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



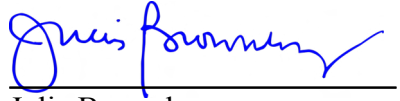
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



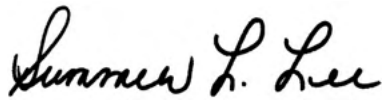
Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



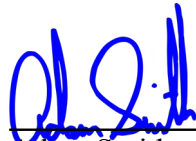
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



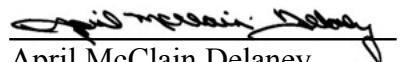
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



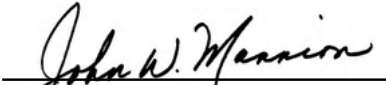
Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

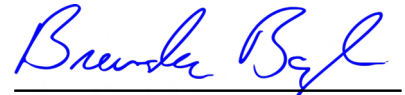



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress





April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress

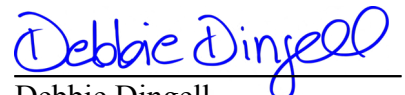

John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

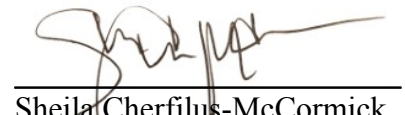

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress


Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

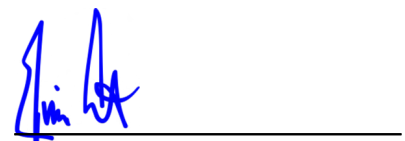

John Garamendi
Member of Congress


Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress


Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress


Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress


Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress


Jim Costa
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Raskin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" and last name "Raskin" clearly distinguishable.

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress