

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

March 14, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education & Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley More Capito
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education & Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

Thank you for the Committee's strong bipartisan leadership in providing full funding for local public broadcast stations through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ready To Learn program, and public media's interconnection system in your FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Bill. The levels you provided in the Senate bill are essential to the continued public services that local stations provide every day in the communities they serve and I urge the conferees to accept your levels for public broadcasting funding.

I was disheartened to see that the House Bill eliminated the two-year advanced appropriations for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and included no funding for the Ready To Learn program or the public broadcasting Interconnection. As you consider the FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, I urge you to continue to provide healthy funding for these programs which enable local stations to invest in essential public services in their communities. This funding supports investments in education, public safety, and civic leadership services that all stations are uniquely positioned to provide.

Without adequate funding, important programs providing education, public safety, civic leadership, news, information and community programming may be in jeopardy for many Americans. These services have helped more than three generations of Americans learn to read, while also improving the math and literacy skills of many children living in high-need areas across the country. Local public broadcasting stations play a critical role in alerting, warning, and providing local information during disasters and other crises. Public media is successfully providing trusted local journalism, information, and cultural programming to many parts of our country that are underserved and unprofitable for traditional media sources.

The longstanding practice of two-year advance appropriations for CPB, which was first proposed by President Ford as a five-year advance and enacted by Congress in 1976, allows stations the ability to maximize fundraising efforts to leverage the promise of federal dollars for local impact, ensuring the continuation of this strong public-private partnership. The two-year advance funding mechanism also gives stations critical lead-time needed to plan and produce high-quality programming with accompanying educational resources. Local stations rely on the two-year advance appropriation, and removing this provision will only hurt much-needed clarity.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue and I urge the conferees to support your Senate funding levels for public media in the final FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator