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April 15, 2022

Mr. Crosby Kemper  
Director  
Institute of Museum and Library Services  
955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW  
Suite 4000  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Director Kemper:

I write in strong support of the West Warwick Public Library (WWPL) for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The West Warwick Public Library is the first library in the State of Rhode Island since 2001 to be named a finalist for this honor, and it is the only institution in our state to have achieved this recognition twice. The library, its patrons, and leaders have truly proven their commitment to the values your agency seeks to honor with this award.

The West Warwick Public Library first opened its doors to the public on February 20, 1967. Since that time, it has served as a beacon of education and literacy services for the residents of the Town of West Warwick and across the Pawtuxet Valley.

Last year, when I wrote to you in support of the WWPL, I cited its extensive work to maintain a continuity of services and to provide access to the library throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The WWPL embraced innovation and technology to ensure that residents could have a safe and vibrant connection to their local library. They adapted quickly during the crisis, offering curbside pickup and expanding virtual programming for patrons of all ages and abilities.

Today, the library continues to lead and adapt as the needs of the community change. The WWPL has invested in its excellent youth, teen, and educator programs, tutoring services, and resources for English Language Learners – programs critical to enriching our students and combatting learning loss exacerbated by the pandemic. The library has also worked with a local community action program to provide basic needs assistance to area residents.

Additionally, the WWPL has partnered with a local healthcare organization to address the growing need for access to mental and behavioral health resources. By hosting free workshops and drop-in resource hours, WWPL is connecting patrons with vital resources that are not only life-enhancing but also potentially life-saving.

I find this work by the WWPL to be particularly inspiring. The pandemic has created an historic demand for mental health resources; however, stigma and barriers to care persist. Libraries, universally considered to be cost-free and welcoming environments for

information-seekers of all ages and backgrounds, can serve an important role in reducing that stigma and creating broader access to care.

The West Warwick Public Library, for these reasons and more, embodies the spirit and values of an IMLS National Medal honoree. I wholeheartedly support its nomination and request your consideration within all applicable rules and regulations. If I can be of assistance to you in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jack" and last name "Reed" clearly distinguishable.

Jack Reed  
United States Senator