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Mr. Speaker, more than 87 million Americans tune into public television each week and 30 million listen to public radio. And they depend on this Congress to provide some of the economic resources so that in every community across the country people can listen to those thousand public radio and television stations for programs that inform and inspire.

For help with reading, job training, for the latest digital services, for local news and information, for dozens of other reasons. These stations around the country determine their own program schedules. They often produce their own programming. We, in Oregon, are immensely proud of Oregon Public Broadcasting for its award winning programming. They respond to community needs and leverage local support that is so important.

While the Corporation for Public Broadcasting distributes its annual appropriations from Congress in accordance to a statutory formula for which almost 72 percent of the funds go directly to local public radio and television stations, the Federal appropriations while it only accounts for 15 percent of the entire costs, it leverages critical investments from State and local governments, from universities, businesses and foundations, and most important, from millions of viewers and listeners of public television and radio. They add their dollars to this core vital Federal support, writing checks to allow the public broadcasting to continue. However, we have faced issues of major reduction in this funding which would have immediate and severe impacts on our community and constituents.

Last month, 126 bipartisan Members signed a letter in support for \$430 million in funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. This is a modest amount by reckoning of the vast sums that are thrown around here in Washington, DC, but it has a critical impact. It is going to be essential that we provide the core funding for the Corporation For Public Broadcasting and hopefully retain the practice of advanced funding which costs the Treasury nothing but gives public broadcasting certainty over time so that they can plan on allowing for the changes and development that they need.

There has been a modest request that has been suggested, \$30 million above the fiscal 2006 funding. This is going to not even cover the additional electricity costs that public television must bear to operate both a digital and analogue transmitter. That transition to digital

technology is also important for Congress to focus on. It is not cheap.

Public broadcasting has led the way. They have raised more than \$1.1 billion from all sources for this purpose. We are asking for a little additional money, an increase of \$10 million this year. This can have a critical impact, not just on the clarity of the broadcast that is received by people in their homes, but there is also an opportunity to replace and update the television interconnection system, known as the Next Generation Interconnection System, that the Department of Homeland Security has been testing as a foundation for a new digital emergency alert system. Not just better service for people at home, but an important potential addition to our homeland security.

Last but by no means least deals with educational technology. In the No Child Left Behind legislation passed in 2001, Congress authorized two programs, Ready to Learn and Ready to Teach. Ready to Learn harnesses television's universal reach to improve early childhood learning, while Ready to Teach uses technology to develop more highly-qualified teachers to measurably increase student standards. It is important to make sure that we support Ready to Learn, which received a small increase last year, focused on literacy and teacher professional development. Ready to Teach last year actually sustained a cut. It is requested that funding for both programs be increased in fiscal 2007 to \$32 million for Ready to Learn and \$15 million for Ready to Teach.

Last year we had to come to the floor with a strong bipartisan vote where 87 Republicans joined with every single Democrat to restore Draconian cuts to public broadcasting. This year it is more important than ever for education, for the Public Broadcasting Service, and for national security that we not have to go through that effort.

I urge my colleagues to look carefully at the requests that have been made for public broadcasting and join with us this year in assuring a strong funding base that will leverage hundreds of millions of dollars across America and provide the services Americans deserve.