What does the bipartisan Reed-Cochran library amendment do?

- The bipartisan Reed-Cochran library amendment would not create a new program.

- Instead, the amendment adds provisions to S.1177 to ensure that activities related to effective school library programs are included as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

- Specifically, the bipartisan Reed-Cochran library amendment:
  - Adds language to the state and local plans under Title I of ESEA [Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged] to authorize SEAs and LEAs to provide assistance to LEAs and schools in “developing effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and to help ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education or the workforce without the need for remediation.”
  - Adds language to state and local uses of funds under Title II, Part A of ESEA [Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals] to authorize funds to be used for “supporting the instructional services provided by effective school librarians.”
  - Adds language to Title II, Part D [Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)] to ensure that “school librarians” are eligible for high-quality professional development activities for Kindergarten through grade 5 programming and for grades 6 through 12 programming.
  - Adds “school librarians” to the definition of “specialized instructional support personnel.”

Why are school libraries important?

1. An effective school library program provides students with more than just books selected to hone readers’ developing skills and to instill a love of reading. While reading and books are mainstays of the school library program, today’s effective school library programs are also sophisticated learning environments that provide the education and necessary skills to succeed in college and the workplace.

2. Research repeatedly shows that a well-funded and fully staffed school library with a state-certified school librarian is an integral component of a student’s education.
3. Across the United States, studies have demonstrated that students in schools with effective school library programs learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardized tests than their peers in schools without such resources.

What is the current state of school libraries?

1. School libraries are some of the most underfunded classrooms in the United States. Because ESEA has not adequately recognized the direct correlation between effective school library programs and increased student academic achievement, library resource budgets have been increasingly used to mitigate the effects of state and district budgetary shortfalls. Effective school library programs are a wise investment, but in too many schools across the nation, school library budgets and school librarian positions are being cut.

2. Recent data¹ available from the Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) highlights the lack of support for too many of our students in thousands of schools across the country. NCES data reveals that approximately 8,830 public schools across the nation do not have a school library and for those schools that do have a library, nearly 17,000 schools do not have a full or part-time state-certified school librarian on staff.

3. Unfortunately, over 75 percent of school libraries in California do not have a state-certified school librarian and nearly half of school libraries in Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah do not have a state-certified school librarian on staff.

¹ For additional information on NCES 2011-2012 data, see http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables_list.asp#2012.