(Date)

Dear (JBC Committee Member),

I’m writing to request supplemental funding for a critical function of educational and library infrastructure. Colorado’s statewide library courier system is the great educational equalizer of our state, delivering resources to more than 280 public, academic, community college, school and correctional institution libraries throughout Colorado. No other investment in education provides such a cost-effective solution.

Over the past 13 years:

* The Statewide Courier system has picked up, sorted, and delivered nearly 30 million items.
* This service saved taxpayers $109M compared to US Postal Service costs.
* Colorado’s library users accessed an average of 2.32 million items every year.

The courier system is paid for by libraries, with supplemental funding provided by a state appropriation of $1M for the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC), found within the Colorado Department of Education budget. Unfortunately, funding has not increased in 17 years, although costs for this service have increased nearly 41% during the past 13. Without additional funding from the State, increases in costs are passed on to libraries, and rural libraries that depend on the courier the most are often those that can least afford it.

Twelve years ago, libraries contributed 67% of the funding to pay for the statewide library courier infrastructure, with the remaining costs subsidized by CLiC. Libraries now pay 84% of the total cost of the courier.

I ask you to consider a very modest increase of $150,000 to the state appropriation designated for CLiC. This funding would be used to further fund the statewide courier system -- which would reduce libraries’ burden to 74%. These savings will directly impact communities served by local libraries, particularly small and rural communities.

Last year lawmakers came together to fund our schools and prioritize an educated and engaged citizenry. The funding for our state’s courier system is a small sliver of the more than $5 billion in state money appropriated for education. Yet that small sliver is enormous for the special education teachers who rely on the courier for testing adaptive technologies in their classrooms. And it’s also enormous for our mountain community that uses the courier system to bring (*fill in the blank for your library*).

*End with a personalized closing remark.*

(Signature)