

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3804

December 8, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

**I am looking for an explanation of the State Department's recent changes to its Passport Acceptance Facilities (PAF) Network.**

As you know, through the PAF Network,<sup>1</sup> libraries and other civic institutions partner with the federal government to assist in processing passport applications. This practice dates back over a century. Since the passage of the Passport Act of 1920, third-party acceptance facilities have been used in both Republican and Democratic administrations, and no other laws have specifically restricted the State Department's broad authority to designate specific partners in the program.

It has come to my attention that several public libraries in my district have received attestation notices from the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Acceptance Facility Oversight requiring each library to clarify whether the institution is "a private, charitable, non-profit, or other type of non-governmental organization" or is "government owned and operated" by a local jurisdiction, stating that "[i]f you [selected the former], your organization will be notified that it is being removed from the Passport Acceptance Facility Program." Each institution had just 14 days from the receipt of the attestation to complete it.

After months of silence from State Department, some institutions that completed their requested attestation were recently sent deactivation notices, removing State Department authorization from the organization and ordering them to cease passport operations immediately. The notice refers to 22 U.S.C. 214(a)(1) and 22 C.F.R 51.51(b), that allegedly "prohibit[] private individuals, employees of non-governmental organizations, employees of commercial enterprises, or employees of foreign governments from serving as acceptance agents."

The fees libraries receive for executing these applications make up substantial portions of their operating budgets, in some cases as high as 12%. Changing their authorization status mid-year, without providing opportunities for institutions to wind down operations, will force many libraries to slash employee salaries or lay off staff. Additionally, these changes will constrain

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>

passport services in our local communities, with some libraries being the only institutions open on Sundays to accept applications.

This comes after libraries have already faced numerous threats of funding cuts and proposed scale-backs at critical agencies under this Administration, including Executive Orders (EO) directing the elimination of the Department of Education (ED) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). While state and local jurisdictions may provide additional assistance, these proposed cuts will affect large portions of their operating budgets that could lead to changes in the services they provide, including reliable and free access to the internet; early learning, reading, and childhood development programs; printing and resume assistance; book delivery and returns; and tax preparation services.

**Given these concerns, I request answers to the following questions by COB on January 9<sup>th</sup>:**

1. Demand for passports has continued to grow, with a record 23,308,976 passport applications received in FY25. What portion of applications in 2025 were received through the PAF Network? How will changes to the PAF Network impact the American public's ability to access passport services?
2. How many libraries have received attestations in the following jurisdictions:
  - a. Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District?
  - b. The state of Pennsylvania?
  - c. Nationwide?
3. How many libraries have received deauthorization notices in the following jurisdictions:
  - a. Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District?
  - b. The state of Pennsylvania?
  - c. Nationwide?
4. As this program has excelled under both Republican and Democratic administrations, what conversations prompted this change? Please note any executive orders, agency directives, or additional statutory and regulatory authorities that were involved in this decision.
  - a. Did you consider a gradual transition in order to reduce the immediate impact on the annual budgets of these important community institutions and ensure public access to passport services?
5. While the current Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) states that execution fees may be retained "by an official of a State or local government or of the United States Postal Service (USPS),"<sup>2</sup> Congress was clear in the passage of Public Law 118-31<sup>3</sup> just two years ago, with 22 USC 213(a), Subsection B, Paragraph 7 granting the Secretary broad authority to appoint "Any other person specifically designated by the Secretary." As such, can you confirm that this policy change is a choice by the Administration and not mandated by law?

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-51/subpart-D/section-51.51>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-118publ31/pdf/PLAW-118publ31.pdf#page=834>

- a. The same change is noted in another section of the CFR.<sup>4</sup> Once again, can you confirm this policy change is a choice by the Administration and not mandated by federal regulation?

For nearly three centuries, public libraries have played a crucial role in the American experience. In return for just 0.003% of federal spending – just \$0.75 per taxpayer each year - individuals, families, and children across our United States have benefited from the knowledge, materials, and services – including passport assistance – that these incredible institutions provide. I hope to work with you further to ensure that this remains the case.

I would appreciate a timely response to my questions. If you need further clarification, please contact Sarah Jacobs in my office at [Sarah.Jacobs@mail.house.gov](mailto:Sarah.Jacobs@mail.house.gov).

Respectfully,



Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress (PA-04)

CC: John Armstrong, Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State  
Daniel Bilow, Director, Office of Acceptance Facility Oversight, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-51/subpart-B/section-51.22>