



# West Haven Library

COLLEEN BAILIE, Executive Director

WEST HAVEN, CT 06516

March 8, 2021

Hello, my name is Colleen Bailie, Executive Director of the West Haven Public Library and a Milford resident. I am writing in regards to HB-6439, supporting the importance of not making cuts to the CT State Library.

The CT State Library is an integral and necessary part of the CT Library's ecosystem. The CT State Library enables group discounts, networking and up to date professional training. The state library provides access to databases and information that would be financially out of reach to maintain for many individual libraries.

The state library has seen significant reductions in the budget over the last 12 years. These reductions have caused a decrease of services to underserved Connecticut populations. BorrowIT, a reciprocal library borrowing program, was cut by 57% from 2008's appropriations. This program enables patron access to materials in any library in the state with their library card. During the pandemic, this has been essential for many, with some libraries unable to open while the town next door is. While technology and digital access is a vital service in the state library's ecosystem, BorrowIT is just as important and cannot handle another 15% cut this year.

The budget cuts to the State Library are passed onto the individual libraries, resulting in reduced services. The CLC, a state legislative program, provides regional means of libraries to make bulk purchases for many types of items, such as books, at significant discounts. Cutting a service that libraries continue to need does not help push libraries forward.

The CLC provides discounts on a number of databases, including some used at my library. VetNow, which is a live tutoring for veterans to assist them in home and job searches, HelpNow, homework and tutoring help for students, and JobNow, which assists adults looking for jobs; to name three. This digital access provides a wide variety of education that can help the people of Connecticut reach their dreams. A destructive domino effect would result in cuts that are tied into the state discount programs. Last year alone, West Haven Library saved \$25,345 from being a member of CLC.

My library was one of the 65 that received funding from the Governor's Everyone Learns Initiative, which enabled us to continuously and safely stay open and serve the public since July of 2020. Between the CLC's discount on the furniture and the Everyone Learns Initiative, we were able to purchase private study areas and easily cleaned and sturdy furniture, tables and chairs. This would not have been possible without the CLC or the Governor's Initiative.

I urge the State to recognize the savings that libraries currently and historically have provided to every community. Any cut to the State Library will have repercussions that will effect years of careful and

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[westhavenlibrary.org](http://westhavenlibrary.org)



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professional planning, including the federal maintenance of effort funding, which in essence cuts the library funding twice as much. A well-funded State library serves us all.

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