



Written Testimony on Behalf of the Connecticut State Library (HB-6439)

March 9, 2021

To Members of the Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I am the director of the Cragin Memorial Library in Colchester, a West Hartford resident, and a past president of the Connecticut Library Association.

I am writing to urge you reject the Governor's proposed cuts to the Connecticut State Library in the proposed budget (HB-6439). Its budget has been cut 32% over the past decade through a combination of cuts and annualized rescissions. These cuts have already reduced the breadth and depth of the services provided to Connecticut's libraries and citizens.

The Connecticut state Library is a small but mighty agency, providing support to public libraries, (K-2) school libraries, and college and university libraries through its diverse programs and services. It also provides direct services to the public through the Law Library, the Inter-Library Loan (deliverIT CT) program, Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, and State Archives.

Libraries of all kinds are investments with truly amazing return on investment. For example, the borrowIT CT program, Connecticut's unique statewide public library card currently operates on \$703,000 (down 43% from FY '08) but provides Connecticut's residents with an estimated \$52,000,000 value in materials that they borrow. During this COVID year libraries pivoted to continue to deliver services. Cragin Memorial Library reopened in July – we see several hundred visitors every day. However, not every library has been able to open its doors. My staff is happy to help non-residents whose town libraries aren't able to be open to browse our collection, to borrow, to study quietly, or use our public computers. The borrowIT CT program allows me to grow our collection, expand our online resources, and develop my staff's skills.

We have now reached a tipping point. The Governor's proposed cuts, if enacted, will lead to the additional loss of \$97,000 in Federal Funds from the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS). This additional loss will result in the State Library scrambling to reduce more of its vital programs and services.

I ask you to not cut the Connecticut State Library and to not allow it to be cut any further. Any cut at this point also cuts Federal dollars. It is imperative that these cuts not happen.

Sincerely,

Kate Byroade

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