

TO: Connecticut State Legislature
FROM: Vicky Coffin
SUBJECT: CT State Library Budget, HB-6439
DATE: March 9, 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you today to voice my support for the Connecticut State Library and the CSL proposed budget. Although I am currently the director of a small public library in Connecticut, I have been a librarian serving in both public and college libraries for more than 20 years, and in each position that I have held, the services that the CSL supports have been invaluable.

As an academic librarian, my role served to assist college students with research papers and other assignments. In an age of “alternate facts”, the CSL’s financial support of scholarly, refereed, peer-reviewed journal databases for college and public patrons, is more essential than ever before. The collective bargaining power of the CSL with these database vendors cannot be emphasized enough in its value to our educational institutions and researchers.

In my current position as the Library Director of the Salem Free Public Library, as well as the elected position of Region 6 Representative to the Connecticut Library Association Executive Board, my library’s funding is directly influenced by the CSL budget. Traditionally, most public libraries receive local funding which is equivalent to only 1.5% of a municipality’s budget in order to support services to our communities. The CSL assists with grant distribution for planning, construction purposes, and more. These grants are vital to support the local public libraries at the heart of our communities.

In addition, each CT resident may obtain a library card in his/her hometown, and through the BorrowIT program, he/she is able to use that card at every other public library in the state. In order to maintain equity in collections and services, libraries who lend more items to residents outside of their own communities receive funding through CSL in order to provide for the influx of non-resident patrons. The BorrowIT distribution to public libraries, which the governor has proposed cutting, would have the trickle-down effect of hurting those public libraries who rely on that funding to serve all of Connecticut’s residents.

In conclusion, I am asking that any cuts to the Connecticut State Library’s budget be reversed and full funding be restored to this vital institution.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicky M. Coffin

Library Director, Salem Free Public Library

Region 6 Representative, Connecticut Library Association Executive Board