



Regarding HB-6439 **Support for Connecticut's Library Institutions**

From: Priscilla Colwell, Library Director, Putnam Public Library in Putnam, CT

During the unpredictable last year our library patrons depended on us to bring normalcy and support to their lives. Putnam is a commercial hub in our rural region of Northeast Connecticut, and subsequently we have a good number of out of town patrons using our library. This use of our library has been partially reimbursed with BorrowIT (formerly Connecticard) funds since 1976. We have used the annual reimbursement to pay for programming and technology which exceeds our town budget, and the funds are necessary to the functioning of our small library. BorrowIT is such a longstanding example of resource sharing and equity that I was very troubled when I heard that this already underfunded service will be cut by \$100,000. Reducing this funding decreases incentives for towns to participate, leading communities to refuse access to non-residents.

The Connecticut State Library has lost 31% of its funding over the past decade, which undermines our local library services to all ages and demographics. These reductions take on more importance when we see that \$97,000 of Federal IMLS funding is also in jeopardy because of the proposed \$200,000 in cuts. These budgetary decisions are never easy, but we would ask that the State Library funding be restored. Your Connecticut library community is working very hard to maintain high standards of community service and equity. We need continued full support from the State Library!

Thank you so much for your consideration,

Priscilla Colwell