

Re: HB-6439- AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

March 1, 2021

Dear Members of the Connecticut General Assembly,

I submit this written testimony in support of Connecticut libraries. Currently, I am a Circulation Librarian at the Hagaman Library in East Haven and have been at the library for 27 years.

I wish to say for a moment about what we all have gone through in the last year and how the library has answered the call to service during an unprecedented time in our nation's history and the world.

As a librarian, since partially reopening and doing curbside services, I have seen tears, grief, depression, heartache, and other emotions that I can't describe from patrons and heard their stories during quarantine and lockdown. I wish I could have gave them a friendly hug but we have to social distance, which pains me as a human being.

As I read up on viruses and heard stories about my fearless great-grandmother, who was a nurse during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, the gravity of the situation hit close to home. Soon I was reading obituaries of people I knew from the library, which left me with a sadness I have not felt since my mother passed away years ago. I thought to myself, how do we fight an invisible enemy wreaking havoc on our people? We do it by fighting this battle with compassion, humanity, stoicism, and a keen sense of intellect guarded by science, faith, and the absolute truth of our cause.

As Albert Einstein said, "The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library."

People do know our location and have sought us out.

With heartfelt sincerity and with solemn gratitude, the library has helped patrons by listening, serving, providing, and assisting them every day with their daily informational and reading needs, as well as, providing virtual programs and activities for children and adults alike.

Librarians are at the forefront of this pandemic and we need all the help we can get. We will continue this war to the very end until COVID-19 is a far, distant memory.

Thank you for your time and please continue to fund Connecticut libraries.

Christopher J. Hemingway
Circulation Librarian/Notary Public
Hagaman Memorial Library
227 Main St.
East Haven, CT 06512
203-468-3890