

Lisa Karim, Director, Simsbury Public Library  
To: Appropriations Committee  
**RE: HB-6439**  
Date: March 3, 2021

I'm writing today to voice my support for the Connecticut State Library Budget. The proposed \$200,000 budget cut to the Connecticut State Library will also lead to a loss of an additional \$97,000 Federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE). This will be catastrophic to the State Library's ability to meet the needs of Connecticut residents.

Cuts to the Connecticut State Library are cuts to Federal dollars.

Specifically, in jeopardy due to the 15% budget cut of \$100,000 by the Governor is the BorrowIt program. The BorrowIt CT program, created in 1976, is enormously popular and enables ALL Connecticut residents to freely borrow materials from other libraries at no additional costs. This program is one of the best examples of longstanding regionalization and resource sharing. It supports equity and saves money for communities. BorrowIt has a tremendous return on investment for the State with an estimated value of \$52,000,000 for the borrowed materials and a cost of \$700,000. Once funded over \$1 million, BorrowIt has been whittled to 57% of the 2008 appropriation. Reducing funding decreases incentives for towns to participate, leading communities to limit material to non-residents.

As a West Hartford mom of 3 teenaged girls, BorrowIt is a tremendous asset to my family. My girls are good students yet sometimes procrastinate completing assignments to the very last minute. BorrowIt has saved us more than a few times in this situation. When in need of a book at the last minute, if the West Hartford Library doesn't own it or if it is checked out, we have been able to find it at any of the neighboring libraries. We're then able to travel to the neighboring library and borrow the book with our West Hartford library card. The assignment has been saved!

I implore you to restore \$100,000 to Connecticut's BorrowIt program.

The Connecticut State Library has lost 31% of its funding over the past 10 years as cuts and accumulating rescissions have cut away at the staff and services of the agency. Those cuts negatively impact services and resources for residents and students of all ages. Libraries of all kinds will either take on additional, unanticipated costs, or will have to reduce or eliminate services. This amounts to a second tax.

Simsbury Public Library, as well as many other libraries throughout the State have been forced to fund an additional material delivery service when cuts to the State Library budget impacted the DeliverIt program and it could no longer meet the usage demand. DeliverIt is a service which allows residents to return library material to any library in the state and it will then be delivered to its owning library. These are dollars which Simsbury and other libraries could have used to fund local resources and services.

Cuts at the State level of library funding are false savings leading to higher costs/reduced services locally.

It's time for cuts to the Connecticut State Library to end.