

Hello. My name is Sarah Lynch. I live in New Britain, CT and work in as a school librarian in West Hartford, CT.

I am writing about HB-6439 and in opposition of any cuts in the state budget to anything under the Connecticut State Library portion of the 2022-23 fiscal year budget. The proposed cuts totaling \$200,000 will lead to an additional \$97,000 cut in Federal IMLS funds. A \$297,000 cut will damage vital programs and services of the State Library. The Connecticut State Library receives Federal money from the Institute of Museum & Library Services. The Governor's proposed cuts to the State Library would trigger the Federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE) statute and stands to lose \$97,000 in Federal funds for Connecticut. This additional cut would force the State Library to find additional savings, further damaging the State Library's ability to meet the needs of Connecticut's citizens. Libraries are one of the last places left that one can go and no be expected to purchase something or pay money to enter and utilize the space and all it has to offer.

I am a school librarian in West Hartford and will be directly affected by these proposed cuts in my ability to purchase materials for my students and staff to use. We are members of the Connecticut Library Consortium. This membership affords us great discounts that my school district would not be able to otherwise negotiate. This allows me to provide more to staff and students for less and this savings repeats around the state in other public and school libraries. I can't believe I am seeing yet another cut to such an important part of our society. We all know knowledge is power and access to knowledge affords greater power, especially for those without which we know is a great deal of people during this difficult time. Public libraries provide people with a place to use free internet and a computer as well as access to job search assistance- everything from resume writing to completing applications online. When I was just moving to CT after college and looking for a full-time job, I used my local libraries for internet access and job searching assistance. As a child, I visited my local library at least once a week and devoured books my family would not have otherwise been able to afford to purchase for my reading pleasure and informational needs. This is an example of how important libraries are to so many people. Many have been used as feeding centers and places for people to gather. Please not only stop the cuts, but propose an increase to funding for libraries so everyone has better access to information and services. I use the BorrowIT CT program for everything from my own personal reading to books I don't have in my own school library that I want to share with my students.

Please restore and increase all funding related to the Connecticut State Library. It is sad that I am having to write anything to defend our libraries against cuts in a time when access to information and technology is so important. Thank you for doing this and more to support our state libraries.