

As a resident of Wethersfield and a school librarian who relies on the Connecticut Library Consortium for many things, I am opposed to the funding cuts proposed for the state budget.

When COVID began, libraries were recognized as critical resources and many found ways to provide services both in-person and virtually to meet the needs of their unique communities. More people accessed digital books and other resources than ever before. Libraries and literacy play a crucial role in ensuring an equitably educated, empathetic constituency.

Cutting the funding by 100,000 may not seem like much to you, however it will lead to all CT libraries losing as much as \$97,000 in federal funding. Our libraries, which have seen dramatic budget cuts at the state level over the past years, are now more reliant on the communities in which they are located. This is not an equitable funding strategy. Money from the state helps level the playing field across CT.

What you may not realize about the CLC is that they help save both public and school libraries millions of dollars a year. As the primary purchaser for my school library, I rely on the discounts they negotiate, and I know my public library does as well. CLC provides many more services as the sole professional organization for public libraries in CT: I can return a book to any library in the state and it will find its way back to the correct library without burdening the already overloaded postal service; I have taken several professional development classes via CLC; I have participated in roundtables to learn about ways to better serve my patrons.

Please continue to fund the Connecticut State Library to ensure access and equity for all Connecticut's residents.

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