NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

PUBLIC HEARING
FUNDING PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NEW YORK STATE

NOVEMBER 29, 2012
10:00 A.M.

HAMILTON HEARING ROOM B
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK
ASSEMBLYMEMBERS PRESENT:

ASSEMBLYMAN ROBERT REILLY, Chair, Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology
ASSEMBLYMAN THOMAS ABINANTI
ASSEMBLYWOMAN ELLEN JAFFEE
ASSEMBLYMAN PHILIP PALMESANO
ASSEMBLYMAN SAMUEL ROBERTS

WITNESS LIST:

PANEL 1:

JEFFREY CANNELL
   Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education, State Education Department
BERNARD MARGOLIS
   New York State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, New York State Library

CAROL ANNE GERMAIN
   President, New York Library Association

PANEL 2:

IRA SIMON
   President, Ramapo Catskill Library System
ROBERT HUBSHER
   Executive Director, Ramapo Catskill Library System
MARILYN MCINTOSH
   Director, Monroe Free Library
CLAUDIA DEPKIN
   Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library
TERRY KIRCHNER
   Executive Director, Westchester Library System

DAVE DONELSON
   Westchester Library System

PANEL 3:

MARY JEAN JAKUBOWSKI
   Director, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System
THOMAS DINDEMAN
   Executive Director, Nioga Library System
SHERYL KNAB
   Executive Director, Western New York Library Resources Council

MAUREEN O'CONNOR
   Senior Advisor, Queens Library
JEAN SHEVIAK
   Executive Director, Capital District Library Council
TIMOTHY BURKE
   Executive Committee, New York Alliance of Library Systems
JOHN EBERHARDT
   Library Trustees Association of New York State

PANEL 4:

SARA DALLAS
   Director, Southern Adirondack Library System
KATHY NAFTALY
   Acting Director, Crandall Public Library
ALEX GUTELIUS
   Director, Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library
DAVID GOLDEN
   Library Trustee, Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library
J'AIMÉ PFEIFFER  
School Library System Director, Capital Region BOCES

JENNIFER OGRODOWSKI  
Youth Services Director, Saratoga Springs Public Library
ASSEMBLYMAN ROBERT REILLY: We are getting ready to get called down and are ready to go, but let me make a few very brief introductory remarks.

Thank you, everyone, for coming. It's very impressive that you come from all over the State and I want to assure you of, really, the importance of this and that your testimony is taken very seriously. We conducted such a hearing last year and I believe that it was very beneficial to us and to you and I do not underestimate the fact that a five-year trend of cuts was halted and for the first time in five years there was an increase, however modest, in library aid and what we're talking about today is basically a rationale for your requests for funding because this is, in fact, a budget hearing. And I think that last year there was a -- we coalesced around some single issues and some single messages and that's why I thought it was beneficial to you and to us.

What I'm very interested in hearing - and I'm not supposed to direct what I want to hear and I will do less talking and more listening because this is a hearing - after these introductory remarks, but as I mentioned to someone already what has been the effect of the two storms, Irene and Sandy, on the libraries and what role did and are the libraries playing in the recovery process. Also, again, developing and getting behind a single message to people on what the libraries are today in the digital age and getting that message out to our colleagues.
Now, it's my intention to ensure that this hearing is impactful, that we will give a brief summary, very brief summary of this hearing to every one of the Assembly members, as well as the Governor's budget staff. Although it is anticipated that some members, including myself, of course, on the Library Committee will change next year, we will send a slightly more comprehensive summary of this hearing to all the members of the Library Committee as well as whoever is on the Library Committee in the forthcoming year and it's anticipated that that will be formed towards the end of January or early February. And what I would encourage each of you to do, as I did in the past, is send a copy of your testimony to each of your legislators or however many legislators are in your area and for those that are associations, you know, work out however that might be to the systems or whomever.

We have several other Assembly members on their way, but for the moment let me introduce the Ranking member, Phil Palmesano from the Southern Tier and Sam Roberts from Syracuse who already this morning showed me his library card and you got a new one, I might mention, which, I think, is important when he was visiting the libraries in his district and that shows the interest of us in what you're all doing.

Assembly member Palmesano.

ASSEMBLYMAN PHILIP PALMESANO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and first I just want to thank you and welcome you all for making this trip up to Albany, just as many of you did last
year and I agree a hundred percent with what Bob said, that last year the hearing we had really set the tone for the budget discussions that went forward and I have to tell you, at least in the region I represent, the advocacy, the efforts, the reach from members who are advocating on behalf of the libraries is very vocal and very loud and we heard you.

And I think one thing that was really evident to me as the budget process started was just the number of members, rank and file, Chairman Bob, so many different people are reaching out to leadership and saying why it was important that we paid attention to the funding for our libraries in the upcoming budget and I think we were successful, but I think we have more to do and I think -- and I want to personally give a lot of credit to Bob, after the first budget cycle, said we need to do more and he put this together and you're going to be sorely missed by your colleagues, but thank you for everything you have done on behalf of libraries and your work is going to be felt after you go. So, I just look forward to working with my colleagues here and on the Committee and all of you to continue to move forward. I look forward to listening to your testimony and seeing what road we can take moving forward, things we can do to improve, challenges that we need to address and opportunities we need to look for. So I look forward to your testimony. I look forward to working with you and also just to let you know our door is always open to you for your ideas and suggestions. So thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you, Phil.
Assemblyman Roberts.

ASSEMBLYMAN SAMUEL ROBERTS: Yes. I would just like to say good morning and thank everybody for coming out and also, too, I want to join with saying thank you for your leadership in this Committee and the best to you as you go on to retirement and better things from here. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Our first witness representing the State Education Department is Jeff Cannell, the Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education and Bernie Margolis, who is the State Librarian.

MR. JEFFREY CANNELL: Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Reilly. Thank you for having us here today. My name is Jeffrey Cannell. I'm the Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education and pleased to be here today to testify on behalf of the Board of Regents, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. and the State Education Department. I'm joined today by Assistant Commissioner Bernie Margolis, our State Librarian.

I want to first thank you for the increases in State aid provided to our libraries and library systems in the last State Budget. We understand that these have been challenging times fiscally and your investments in libraries and library systems are an acknowledgment of their importance not only as educational, local and cultural institutions, but as contributors to our economic recovery.

New Yorkers love libraries. New Yorkers love to use public libraries and they were used over 115 million times this past
year and took home over 163 million items ranging from books to the latest e-books. The regions are in the midst of an ambitious reform agenda and libraries have played a part by providing critical teaching and learning resources and opportunities to support the region's goal of ensuring that all students graduate high school ready for college and careers. Libraries provide critical early literacy services and offer job training resources for adults including English basic literacy skills. These services, among many others, make libraries a key component for the sustained success of New York's public education system.

I'm going to discuss some programs and services that libraries and library systems are providing to local communities and how libraries are using collaboration and technology to better leverage resources. I want to take just a moment to put the State's libraries and library systems in context because it does illustrate in part the grand collaboration inherent in the library system. Many New Yorkers are not aware of the State-supported library and information infrastructure that stands behind and supports their local library. The State-supported infrastructure includes the New York State Library, the three types of library systems, public, school and research reference and over 7,000 individual libraries. Because of the State Library and State-supported library systems, New Yorkers may freely access library materials and services that many communities would not otherwise be able to afford. The State Library and library systems use public and private funds to help libraries collaborate and better leverage and extend local resources. This important State-supported
partnership results in library services being delivered more equitably across New York State. This collaboration also brings library services to New Yorkers with special needs, such as persons with physical and learning disabilities, the educationally disadvantaged and others with difficulty in accessing traditional library services. As a result, collaborative library services delivered through the three types of systems benefit all New Yorkers. Students, parents, entrepreneurs, authors, researchers, teachers, health practitioners, job seekers and others capitalize on the rich resources our libraries bring to New York's information infrastructure.

The breadth and depth of programs and services offered by libraries and library systems are vast. In addition to the traditional programs and services that one thinks of when they think of a library, there are many innovative programs throughout the State that we're proud of and serve as examples of library efforts to engage with the community. Here are a few.

At the Fayetteville Free Library you can make an appointment to visit with a librarian for job search help. A child can create a three-dimensional model, their latest invention, and a band student can participate in live musical performances. Fayetteville has just been selected as one of the top 30 public libraries in the United States. The Port Washington Public Library runs a job search boot camp with the support of Assemblymember Michelle Schimel. This intensive eight-week program is designed to share every technique needed for an effective job search and the end result is a good job.
In New York City, a partnership between Queens, New York and Brooklyn libraries brings new and expanded resources to the City's public schools. With an emphasis on online learning this partnership brings to schools a new connection to local library branches and recognizes that educational opportunity extends beyond the school day and the school building.

The New York Heritage Collection is a creation of the nine research and reference resource systems which cover the entire State and have come together to make available local newspaper resources from across the State, as well as photographic and local history and genealogy resources. These are all available online with easy searching to connect people with their past and to celebrate all things New York, and they're available to the public at no charge.

The Bausch & Lomb Research and Development Library was described in a recent nomination for the Special Library of the Year Award as playing a critical role into helping our scientists develop new products by giving them access to key scientific information. We're lucky to have access to literally thousands of publications on paper and electronically. More importantly, our library here in New York is a global resource for Bausch & Lomb helping our teams around the world ultimately bring innovative i-Health solutions to market to help people see better, to live better.

These are just a few of the examples of the exciting things happening in New York's 756 public libraries and in the over
6,000 school, academic, law, health, corporate and special libraries which provide an enviable array of library and information services for New Yorkers.

As highly visible and accessible community anchor institutions, libraries provide both formal and informal learning spaces in the library and online. This is true for whichever community a library serves, a town, a city or village, an elementary, middle or high school, a community college or major university or a hospital or a corporation. Technology has become a key aspect of library services. Libraries strive to ensure digital inclusion for all our citizens so that every New Yorker will be digitally literate or digitally fluent and able to freely access online information and online educational opportunities regardless of where they live or their economic circumstances.

Consider that 72.5 percent of New York's public libraries are the only free source of Internet broadband access in their communities. Over 17,000 public access Internet computers are available today at over 1,000 public libraries. Ninety-four percent of New York's public libraries offer computer-related training to help people of all ages in many languages acquire 21st Century technology skills. Libraries are leaders in expanding wi-fi and broadband access for the public and are paving the way with partnerships to expand capacity for all potential users. Libraries continue to push the envelope on increasing conex speeds and capacity for Internet broadband access. Now over 25 percent of New York libraries have
Internet connect speeds greater than 10 megabits per second and Federal support from E-rate and grant funds is being used to improve access speeds across the State. In order to be competitive and to support local needs, libraries will need even greater capacity and greater speeds to offer the robust wi-fi, video conferencing and other broadband services, now both expected and required by the public.

I would like to reintroduce you to Bernie Margolis and ask him to discuss critical issues facing libraries today.

MR. BERNIE MARGOLIS: Thank you very, very much, Deputy Commissioner Cannell. It's my pleasure to join you today and to first begin on a personal note of thanks to Chairman Reilly and members of the Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology. It's a personal note because I am quite honored and I think privileged to have the Chairman be my representative in the State Assembly. And I assured him today that if he had changed his mind and decided to continue he would at least get two votes from the Willow Lane neighborhood in Loudonville. Thank you very much, Bob, for your amazing service as Chairman of this Committee, your service in State government and your service to your community, your service to the Shaker Heritage Society, the list goes on and on. We are enriched as New Yorkers to have you not only represent us in the Assembly, but to Chair such a critically important committee as the Standing Committee on Libraries. So, we share our special and personal thanks for your service and that extends, of course, to all the members of the Committee who I know have learned
under your leadership how important libraries are and we know you're leaving us in good hands with their knowledge base well-endowed. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you, Bernie, and I might mention that Bernie has spoken for all of the witnesses today and so there's no more need for praise from panelists, but thank you.

MR. MARGOLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that directive. I'll continue with my remarks.

Libraries in New York, as Jeff has already shared, are alive. They're being heavily used in person and online in every part our great State. In over 1,000 locations, libraries are the hubs of community commerce, learning and enterprise. Today in my limited time I want to focus on four very critical areas. First, reviewing the devastation of Hurricane Sandy and her impact on libraries. Second, looking hopefully not too far ahead in terms of the impact of the Federal fiscal crisis, the so-called "fiscal cliff" and the sequestration on critical library services and programs. Third, the continuing need for library infrastructure investments and lastly, but not least, the role of library systems as tools for efficiency improvement.

First, the impact of the Superstorm Sandy and probably in the same breath Irene and the other storm devastations that we've had in the past couple years. Included in the wide devastation from Sandy are major damages suffered by public libraries, academic libraries and school libraries throughout New York City, Long Island and Westchester. The damage to buildings, to
technology infrastructure and to collections of books and materials has been - and this is not an understatement - vast. Assessments continue of the wide range of damage. Our preliminary information suggests building repair costs beyond those required to just get the doors back open. These will be very significant, as will the cost to rehabilitate the damaged collections.

At the same time that we talk about rebuilding and building anew and building again, it's important to acknowledge the facts and to celebrate the essential role that libraries have played in the ravaged areas. Libraries which were able to open extended their hours, provided places for people to recharge cell phones, use the Internet to connect to families, provided warmth, light, food and even in some cases shelter. Libraries helped people deal with water-soaked possessions, which for many represents a lifetime of memories and family history. Libraries provided information, access to news, programs to entertain and educate children, emergency information resources, even offices for FEMA and other relief organizations. The public good for which libraries are known was a public good of immense and remarkable proportions. We are fortunate that a core of dedicated library workers was in place to respond, as they always do, with lifesaving help. I'm especially proud of the work done and being done today in libraries in the affected areas to extend hours and provide service without any question and to connect people to resources now as they rebuild their lives and their homes.

The second point, the fiscal cliff and sequestration.
As with the programs throughout the State, the department is deeply concerned with the consequences of the Federal fiscal cliff and sequestration. We received very critically important Federal support through the Library Services and Technology Act and the prospect of sequestration of those Federal funds has caused great panic throughout the library community. For example, the popular Novel New York Program, which brings a wide range of critical online information resources directly to over 5,000 libraries and is accessible to all New Yorkers, is supported almost entirely with Federal funds. Almost 56 million searches on these databases last year suggests how popular and important these resources are to libraries and the citizens of our State. Even a relatively small loss of Federal funds would force major reductions of this important service. Federal resources support literacy, conservation, technology as well as critical State library specialists who serve our entire State community. It is not realistic to think that reductions in Federal support can be absorbed without scaling back services.

In the third area of library infrastructure, I want to begin by thanking all of you and your colleagues in the Assembly for your amazing support of the Public Library Construction Program. This has been a very, very successful program, particularly over the past seven years with an annual appropriation of $14 million and it has leveraged millions more to improve library services and library facilities especially throughout the State so they are safe, accessible and efficient and, in fact, those three words are critical to how we
view this program, improving the safety of our public buildings, improving their accessibility and making them cost-effective to operate.

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, it is appropriate to begin thinking, maybe rethinking, as well, how we build public facilities to be resilient to the forces of nature. When the State Library last surveyed the library community about building and facility needs, we learned the scope of our overall needs was in the billions, with a "B", of dollars. These range from infrastructure improvements to make facilities accessibility compliant to technology and broadband needs to improved energy efficiencies. Thanks to your investments, libraries have started and continue to make critical improvements in our library facility infrastructures. At a minimum, sustaining these investments will encourage the kind of library renewal that acknowledges the heavy use being made of these facilities and will help library plan to leverage even more local resources.

And lastly, and I think this is quite important, we look to talk a little bit about the library systems as tools for efficiency. The design and the system for delivery of library services in New York is widely replicated. While the primary point of service delivery is the local library, your local school library, public library or your community college or academic library connects through three different types of library systems, and Jeff has done a great job of already explaining those, I think, quite well. These systems, though,
are very critical to providing efficient and reliable means of sharing resources. They also provide centralized and cooperative and collaborative services that an individual library could not provide on its own. They also provide some important specialized services that require a skill set, again, that no individual library could possibly afford.

These often behind-the-scene services of the library systems are the backbone which permit individual libraries to provide state-of-the-art technology, book and material delivery, publicity and promotion and a wide range of other critically-needed library services including the highly acclaimed Summer Reading in New York Libraries program which many of you and your colleagues in the Assembly participate in and which produced this past year 1.74 million children reading during the summer, critically important to their success in school, in careers and in their future education opportunities.

While our focus has generally been at the local library level where the rubber meets the road, we cannot ignore the importance of the public library systems, the school library systems, the regional resource and reference systems. We count on them to do more and more in providing service and they're all going to ask me for a bigger chunk of the pie, overseeing quality control and compliance and helping guarantee quality services. We hope we can continue discussing ways to encourage positive discussions under way between various library systems looking at collaborating, partnering and
approaching shared services in new ways. The benefits to the State for incentivizing and rewarding improved efficiencies are great. The systems are essential to library service delivery for all New Yorkers and they need resources to be efficient and effective.

In closing, funding needs always run ahead of the available resources. Your past commitments, especially during the difficult financial times we're facing, have acknowledged the importance of the local library. I recently saw a statement: *Cutting library funding in a recession is like closing the hospital during the plague.* Obviously, we don't want that situation. Our libraries play a role in our economic development and are critical quality of life institutions for all New Yorkers. Our libraries serve small businesses, help the unemployed and underemployed find or train for new jobs and contribute greatly to our goal of ensuring that New Yorkers succeed in college and careers. As you weigh the difficult challenges of 2013, I know you will keep public libraries and the valuable services they provide to New Yorkers and our communities in the forefront of your mind. Thank you very much for the opportunity today to share these thoughts with you.

**ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY:** Thank you very much, Jeff and Bernie. We have been joined by two additional members of the Assembly, Tom Abinanti from Westchester and Ellen Jaffee from Rockland County.

Thank you very much for coming and it isn't my lack of interest, I don't have any questions, but I want to make just a very
brief comment. I'm actually thrilled and very pleased with your statements and that's because they capsulized what I think we discussed last year and I think you stated very well a single message, a very positive message, a very important message, a very comprehensive message about what libraries are about and I think that message was helped formed year when we discussed things here but, more importantly, as you had your discussions throughout the State and all that you're doing so I found that message -- I was very impressed by it and I think it is the right message. I like the message because that's what I believe, so that's my bias.

I would say, though, that now what we have to do, and I say this as a politician, we have to say what you said in 30 seconds and I'm serious about that. That's about as much time as we have. A good example of that is we have some people in the Legislature, we have the debate of wine in grocery stores and they have the little slogan, *The last store on Main Street*, it says a lot and that's in about five seconds, but we have to think about how we're going to capture what you said and I think what most of us believe in 30 seconds. And I think what we also have to work on as we see that is to get the people that work in and support the 7,000 libraries in the State onto this message and giving this message to our elected officials and I think that's important and I think we don't do that well enough at the present time.

And finally I would say what we eventually have to do is be very specific about our ask so that we all have the same
message. Why I like what you said is that it's a message, I think, that most of us will share, us being believers in the library community. And so we have to say next year we want $5 million or we want this issue or we want this capital, whatever that might be, but thank you very much.

I'll now call on my fellow members if they have any questions or comments.

Phil.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Thank you for your testimony. You're always very helpful.

A couple points I wanted to ask you about that you mentioned, it's been an issue that I think we're all concerned about that's important is relative to the Construction Grant Fund. I know it's been at $14 million. Given what you said about the impacts of Sandy, but also we recently changed the match, the local much from the 50/50 to 25/75 to help more distressed or areas that have a little more of a fiscal challenge.

Given those two areas, what level do you think that you can see - with the effects of Sandy, but also given more -- you know, you have more people accessing the funds or able to access the funds you're going to put more stress on the dollars available. What do you see as a reasonable number to look at if we look to increase that fund down the road?

MR. CANNELL: He said "reasonable number."

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Well, any
number, how about that?

MR. MARGOLIS: Well, that's a very good question because we want to be sure that a couple things are in place to be effective in using resources. So we could say yes, the pent-up need is $2.5 billion, but if you gave us $2.5 billion we couldn't effectively deploy it today. We have a program that has $14 million in it. If we had a program or ratcheted that up to $50 million, I think we could do a good job of making that effective. Part of the challenge of that is the infrastructure is not in place either in the State Library staffing or the staffing of the public library systems to be able to effectively deploy and monitor those resources so that they're effectively used, so that there's good technical advice, good adequate review of the financial records and the planning that goes into those.

So, you know, we would -- to give you a figure, because I think that's what you're after, you know, a target of between $50- and $100 million would be a remarkably important impact on library infrastructure. Particularly, we're expecting that the devastation from Sandy will result in libraries needing to seek State support to augment what may be available locally, what may or may not be available from FEMA and the other Federal resources to rebuild. And we do have some worry that that could easily take the $14 million and a lot more just for hurricane-related rebuilding.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: On that same topic, I recently met with some of the library folks from my district and one of the things that they mentioned and I want to get your input
on is the inclusion with the whole need to the digital and the broadband expansion, especially in our rural areas which, you know, many of us represent, getting access to that broadband and that Internet access. Do you see broadband, that the Construction Grant Fund is a viable area to address within the Construction Fund for broadband purposes, including that as an avenue to fund expansion of broadband for our libraries?

MR. MARGOLIS: We would love to be able to look at the Library Construction Program in the broadest context.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Right.

MR. MARGOLIS: And utility services, however we define them, and I think broadband could easily be included among those. We wouldn't think of building a new public library building today without electric wiring or plumbing. Why would we not think about including the most grandiose, the most expansive view of what broadband technologies could bring to our citizens? We've had the good fortune of having some Federal money through our major BTOP Grant that we got and many libraries in many communities that had no broadband in our State now have broadband as a result of that. Clearly, the facilities that they are supporting and maybe new facilities that they plan on building would need to have those same kinds of capacities. So, yes, we very much support expanding definitions so broadband is very much part of the library construction program.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: I just have really one more question and that's around the area of collaboration and
shared services because I know, obviously, in every area of
government that is something that is more and more discussed from
every area and I know as we have talked about the fact that when the
economy is bad you have more and more people using libraries and
library resources, especially -- it's not just children, it's adults and job
searchers, job preparation.

Has there been discussions, as far as you're aware of,
with organizations like Workforce New York, because, you know, a
lot of times we're trying to avoid duplication but with Workforce New
York, they do a lot of job training and job preparedness and
sometimes their resources -- I mean, that's another pool of resources
that are coming in primarily from the Federal government that would
allow outreach and job training. And as we have talked about,
especially in many of our rural areas and every area, our libraries are
the central hub of areas for people to go to from a community and that
might be a partnership or a collaboration we could look at that they
can look at partnering with their local Workforce New York, another
source of possible funds that might not come directly from the State.
They can help with that outreach because of the technology a library
might have and basically allowing us to reach more people, especially
in the rural areas that might be underserved under some of these
circumstances. Is that an opportunity you see or are there discussions
going on along that way around the State?

MR. MARGOLIS: I'm very pleased to be able to
report that at the State level, the State Library and the Department of
Labor have had very, very productive ongoing discussions. We offer Jobs Now which is a pretty sophisticated data resource online, free to all New Yorkers. It includes resume writing and all kinds of other skills. At the system level, there's significant activity taking place in terms of job centers located in libraries, DOL and other agency people participating with libraries. You know, everything from the boot camp that your colleague supports to, you know, on sort of the other side of the job spectrum help in creating small businesses, writing business plans, bringing in other kinds of local resources, banks and credit unions to help people who have an aspiration to create their own business so we're very, very riveted in this area.

Though we would love connections and networking if you have contacts that you think we should make and names of people, we would love to use your directory to make contacts to expand that because libraries really are at the very hub of employment-related activities. People come to libraries every single day looking for work. They know that we have comprehensive information. They obviously know we have lots of local information Statewide and even broader than that. We help people get training if they need additional training. We help people do the actual job search activities and libraries have been very successful in this endeavor.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Thank you very much.

MR. MARGOLIS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Tom.
ASSEMBLYMAN THOMAS ABINANTI: Mr. Chairman, only I'd like to echo your comments. Thank you. I think you summed it up perfectly.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you, gentlemen.

Our next witness is Carol Anne Germain, President of the New York State Library Association.

MS. CAROL ANNE GERMAIN: Good morning. I have to echo Bernie's comments, but I won't go too deep into them.

Good morning and thank you for providing me with the opportunity to present today regarding State funding for public libraries and library systems. I would like to begin by thanking Governor Cuomo for maintaining the previous year's funding levels in the 2012 Executive Budget. I would also like to thank all those members of the Legislature who supported our legislative priorities last year.

Libraries are an essential part of every community. They provide access to free, unbiased information and they bridge to cross the digital divide and they serve as a focal point in the community, hosting countless community groups and events. The value of New York public libraries has become ever more poignant in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and Hurricane Irene, as well.

As highlighted in a recent New York Times article, libraries across the disaster area are providing needed resources to storm victims. An example of this includes a mobile library bus which is now situated outside a former location of a Rockaway branch.
library - which has been basically annihilated - offering warmth, power outlets, emergency information and books to storm victims. If you would like that article, I would be happy to send it to any of you and all of you.

Libraries are educational institutions delivering learning opportunities at every stage of life. Parents introduce their children to books and foster a love of reading beginning with story time programs that serve to develop early literacy skills. Throughout elementary and high school, school and public librarians provide guidance and resources that augment general classroom learning and foster critical thinking and information analysis. Following formal education, libraries continue to serve the needs of the public, addressing human curiosity and hunger for information.

Libraries provide access to what has become a necessity in today's world, access to a computer as well as the Internet. Can you imagine applying for a job and not having access to send or upload an online application or not being able to look up information on a diagnosis that the doctor has just given you for your mother? That is the reality of one-third of minority households in New York State and 67 percent of homes with annual income below $20,000 a year. Public libraries bridge this digital divide by providing access to this technology for free. Walk into any public library at any time on any day and you will see computer labs with nearly every terminal in use.

In recent years, libraries have also expanded their
role serving as career training and job placement centers. The career development center at the Brentwood Public Library recently circulated success stories of various patrons who gained basic computer skills, returned to school, found employment or even started a small business, all thanks to the services provided at the library.

New York's public libraries need your support. Despite last year's modest funding increase, library aid remains below the 1997 levels. As a framework of reference, in 1997 Bill Clinton was just beginning his second term as President. No one was yet worrying about Y2K and Titanic was a hit in the theaters.

Although positive steps have been taken in the last couple of years, library funding is still down nearly 20 percent from its peak in 2007 at a time when library use is at 12 percent -- is up 12 percent and the circulation is up over 21 percent. In a 2012 survey of 284 public libraries, that's about 37 percent of libraries in New York State, in just one day there were over 170,000 patron visits. Of them, nearly 40,000 used a public computer, over 24,000 reference questions were answered, over 13,000 children took part in a program and over 340,000 items were circulated. These numbers illustrate that contrary to those who claim that the Internet is making libraries irrelevant, library usage and circulation continue to rise.

The library community has always been modest in our funding requests, never asking for more than the State can realistically provide and our needs are small, so small that the amount of library aid in the budget is less than one-tenth of one percent of the
State budget as a whole. In order to continue to provide all the services that the public has come to rely on, we request that the library aid be restored to the pre-recession level of $102 million. Keep in mind that libraries are nearly entirely supported by the communities they serve. An average less than 9 percent of a public library's budget comes from State aid and, yet, that funding is critical to their operation, as they have already reduced expenses and operations as much as possible. Your constituents overwhelmingly support their libraries -- sorry about that. Additionally, according to the State library, there's approximately $2.5 million in library construction and renovation needs throughout the State and, yet, the State provides only $14 million annually for public library construction. A modest increase of $20 million would be welcome.

Your constituents overwhelmingly support their libraries. Over the last three years on average 97 percent of library budgets have been approved by the voters. I hope that you will support libraries as well by voting in favor of full-funding restoration. Beyond all the numbers and statistics and at the end of the day, this is a matter of what type of society we all want to live in. Libraries make for better communities, a better informed public, bridge the digital divide and support the functioning of democracy. I, for one, want to live in a world where libraries are viewed to be just as essential as police and fire departments in this community. Every one of you has come here to Albany to serve the interests of your community as well as your State. Supporting library funding is an investment in a better
future for New York State. There's no better place for citizens of New
York State to gather knowledge than at their local library.

And on a personal note, I would most not likely be
here today if it were not for public libraries. As a young mother, I
moved to a small, rural hamlet in eastern Rensselaer County in 1989.
I wanted to be involved in the community, it was very important. I
started working with others on the development of a park. Since I did
not own a computer or a typewriter at that time, I used the local
library to access needed information including books via intra-library
loan facilitated through the public library system, as well as a word
processor to type letters for funding. I spent a lot of time in the
library. The library director knew this and asked me to be a trustee.
My response was that I was a waitress and that there was no way that I
could be a trustee. She reassured me that all I had to do was come
once a month and vote and I did. I also learned at that time that the
library -- it was in great need of reference materials. The library
director handed me the foundation book, again a loan through the
library system, and I quickly got to work and selected foundations that
were not only interested in education, but other areas of interest and
selected materials that I believed they would purchase and add to our
collection. I sent out hundreds of letters and in total received over
$20,000 in funds.

This experience prompted me to go to college and
within five years I had an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree and a
master's degree. This spring, 22 years later, after that public library
director asked me to serve as a trustee, I received a Ph.D. in Informatics. Without academic and public libraries I could not have conducted my research or done most of my assignments during those years.

    Yes, public libraries and their systems do make a difference. With your support they can make an even stronger impact for the citizens of New York. Thank you for your time and attention and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any information that you need.

    ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you.

    You did include, as I had requested, actually, during the last presentation, a specific ask and are those numbers -- they have the support of what I'll call the library community, $102 million for operational aid and then $20 million for construction?

    MS. GERMAIN: I think that would certainly be --

    ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: I think it's important that there's a single message that goes out and this is what we're asking for and we're all behind that.

    Very quickly, and even if you don't answer this maybe upcoming witnesses might mention it. I do believe that the access to computers is very important, a very important service, but to me in today's world that's kind of simplistic, just saying we provide computers for people that don't have them. And I think that in this digital world with all the social media and people having access to iPhones and every other type of technology which is expanding so
quickly that the libraries are doing much more than just having computers where people can access the Internet and what are libraries doing in the future where people will be able to, you know, from their iPhone immediately get a book or contact their library or whatever.

So, do you want to comment on that or we could just leave that to some of the other people that we might -- it's not within the written testimony, just comment on, Well, here are some of the new technologies we're using or looking to use.

MS. GERMAIN: I think it's more than just the new technologies. It is also the instruction and connection with librarians and information professionals, in particular at public libraries and through the system, that we provide continued education. It's not just using a computer but how do you use it. Many people -- I'm an academic. I teach students at the University at Albany and many of the students come in and are not aware of a lot of the issues that surround privacy issues, the use of actually effectively searching for information on tools such as Google. Certainly through public libraries and academic libraries we are teaching our citizens of New York State how to be more effective and more efficient in using those types of resources. It's not just having a phone. It's not just having a computer but how to understand how to do it in order to access the appropriate information, how to evaluate that information. And so that is a very strong component of what we're doing. Does that answer your question?

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Yes.

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Phil.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: I just have one kind of quick question. Outside of the funding issue, which we know is always part of the equation, is there more that you can see that the State can do to help allow for more cooperation and collaboration and whether it's providing more flexibility - are there any impediments that you see that kind of hinder efficiency that we can look to remove, any suggestions on that front, as well? I mean, at the end of the day we know funding is the key component to much of your success but with more folks on collaboration. Are there things that the State can do to remove burdens that would give you more flexibility to make the dollars go further and allow you to help more people?

MS. GERMAIN: I don't off the top of my head, but if I think of something, I will send it to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Assembly Abinanti.

ASSEMBLYMAN ABINANTI: Mr. Chairman, the only comment I have is I appreciate and don't disagree with the emphasis on new technologies, but it's becoming that libraries are one of the few places where you can get a book and I don't think we should forget that. All these years we've relied on books and I think particularly kids need to understand the place that books play in our lives and that they've played in the development of our history. And so I don't want to forget that, also. I served on the Supreme Court
Library Board in Westchester County for several years and saw the importance of keeping records and having historical books available to people and there's a certain educational value, societal value and I just want to make that note because we spend a lot of time talking about the library as a community center and as a place for people to access the newest technologies, but I think there's that third piece as well. We don't want to forget the role of books in our history and even today. I mean, not everybody is going to read a book on a Kindle. Some people still like to have paper and it's getting harder and harder to get books as bookstores are closing and as they become more expensive and that just gives the library another niche that maybe nobody else has. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Well, I'd say, Tom, that in less than 30 seconds the message of what libraries can give is that you can go into any library in the State and get a book from any other library. It says a lot.

Ellen.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ELLEN JAFFEE: Yes. I want to echo that thought, in terms of the importance of libraries. If we are truly going to focus on education, improving the quality of education, we also have to make libraries a point of destination rather than the malls. I think that if we -- at very young ages if we can encourage parents to bring their children to the library and make that the point of destination, the place where they can take books off a shelf and talk about the books and listen to stories, it improves their
skills in so many ways and it encourages them to become the readers that we certainly need in our society and they need to be if they're going to be successful in school and onward.

So, thank you for your dedication to the library system and I share that they should be points of destination that not only include the presentations that a library can provide, the technology, which is certainly essential. I've gone into the libraries and I visit them regularly with my grandchildren as well as for a variety of other meetings and interactions. I do see that the technology is utilized by many, many young people in our communities, but books are important in encouraging our young people to read and that's why libraries are very essential and we need to assist them in thriving.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you.

MS. GERMAIN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Next we have a panel, and I'll let the people introduce themselves, and they represent the Ramapo Catskill area and especially the library system and some individual libraries from that area.

So, just as each of you speak if you can give your name and your title and affiliation. Thanks.

MR. IRA SIMON: Good morning. I'm Ira Simon, a resident of Monticello, New York. I currently serve as the President of the Board of Trustees of the Ramapo Catskill Library System where I've been a board member and officer since 2004. Prior to that, I was
a member and officer of the board of the Ethelbert B. Crawford Library in Monticello and was the President of the Sullivan County Public Library Association from its inception in 1998 to 2004.

In my capacity as a board member of the Ethelbert Crawford Library, I had the opportunity to discover the impact that RCLS had on the services of our local library that we're able to deliver to our local patrons -- access to the seemingly unlimited collections of all member libraries through the answer system and inter-library loans enabled our small community the resources of a vast system. Our initial foray into computerized technology, which today is wireless throughout the library, was initially made possible with seed money from the system and the maintenance and continuous upgrades to the system we had were developed and implemented by RCLS staff. Our staff and trustee training was developed and implemented by the system. Specialists in children services outreach and developments met with our staff to develop programs and design critical programs for our patrons.

When I became a board member of the Ramapo Catskill Library System I discovered that these services are replicated 48 times over to varying degrees at each member library throughout our system. During the nine years that I've served on the board for RCLS, I have witnessed the continuous erosion to the funding levels established by law in 1990. The result of this diminishment of resources has been a consolidation of services within our system coupled with the elimination of certain programs. Finally, with no
alternatives and much debate, some of it fairly acrimonious, the trustees have implemented service fees to our member libraries which, to our great delight, they have by and large embraced so far. Those service fees were necessary to offset the shortfall caused by funding cuts.

This gradual shift of the responsibility of support from a State mandate to localities seems to me to be unfairly burdensome. Local sources are already supporting their libraries as previous witnesses have testified to. The trend of reduced system funding, despite last year's modest respite, seems to have no end in sight. Inevitably, our service fees will increase if we are to continue offering the services that are vital to the patrons of the libraries within our system. It is imperative that library systems are insulated from the uncertainty of inconsistency and supported as Education Law intended. Thank you.

MR. ROBERT HUBSHER: My name is Robert Hubsher. I'm the Executive Director at the Ramapo Catskill Library System.

"Access to knowledge is the supreme act of truly great civilizations. Of all the institutions that purport to do this, free libraries stand virtually alone in accomplishing this mission" - Toni Morrison. In the increasingly competitive global marketplace, success is largely dependent on one's level of education and access to information. The future success of our State rests upon the extent to which we can assure that our children are provided an exceptional
education and are able to benefit from a superior information infrastructure. As public spending comes increasingly under scrutiny, it is those institutions that embrace cooperation, provide consolidated services, exhibit clear responses to regional needs and demonstrate the highest return for every dollar spent that will emerge as the most worthy of public funding. Since 1959, Ramapo Catskill Library System has operated in this manner.

In the last couple of years it appears as if this notion is being heralded as a paradigm shift that will improve how the State operates; yet, from its inception over 50 years ago RCLS, along with the library systems throughout the State, embraced the concept that cooperation and consolidation is a means of improving the quality of life for New Yorkers while keeping costs under control. Library systems are the poster children for cooperative and consolidated services.

RCLS, working cooperatively with our member libraries, has been able to maintain a basket of consolidated services that continues to help our members provide high-quality local services while keeping local expenditures in check. Together we have established a network covering nearly 2,500 square miles that allows for resource sharing and equity of access. Through a public/private partnership, we have established a fiber optic communication network that connects all of our libraries. During the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, this network ensured that our libraries in Rockland County were able to provide public Internet access to their residents when the
services were lost in three states. Our delivery service is able to transport library materials to and from our members for under 20 cents per item. In the decade from 1990 to 2000, we were able to help all of our libraries automate their services.

Attached to this testimony is a document that shows -- and it's in color, got pretty graphics -- attached to this testimony is a document that shows the return on investment, the value of the services we provide to our member libraries for every dollar spent. This is a conservative calculation and shows that we provide $6.61 for every dollar spent on all of our services except automation, where the value is $3.45 for every dollar spent. If each of you could be making that kind of return on investment -- on your investments, you'd be very happy.

Libraries are part of the education and information infrastructure within the State. They offer much-needed resources to those who cannot afford to buy books or purchase Internet access. They offer government services such as the ability to file a tax return online. They offer entrepreneurs the resources to start a business or to grow their business. They offer preschool children opportunities to learn to read and develop a lifelong love of reading. They offer summer reading programs that help children to maintain or improve their reading level over the summer vacation. They offer people access to computers to apply for jobs. They provide people with a space to meet and engage others in their community. They are a focal point during a civic crisis, such as Hurricane Sandy. Libraries make a
difference in people's lives.

Library systems support the work of libraries and help to reduce local tax expenditures while maintaining high-quality services. Library systems are models of cooperative and consolidated services. Together, libraries and library systems form a key element within both the education and information infrastructures of New York State.

We need your support. We understand that the economy of the State requires prudent spending. All that we ask is that the State aid to libraries is treated in the same manner as aid to schools. Let us work together to make sure that New York State returns to its leadership position within the nation and the world. Let us work together, as the Governor has asked, to improve student achievement, increase parent and family engagement, help high-need and low-wealth communities and manage educational funding and costs by supporting State aid to libraries. Together we can make a difference.

Now, I do have your 30-second elevator speech. Libraries make a difference in people's lives. Library systems connect our libraries. Library systems provide consolidated services and facilitate cooperation and collaboration among our members and beyond. Library systems provide efficient and cost-effective services that help to assure equity of access to resources for all New Yorkers. Library systems help save local tax expenditures through high return on investment. Library systems are the poster children for the success
of consolidated, cooperative and collaborative public services.

    And if you bear with me, I do have a couple of answers to the questions that were asked earlier. Earlier this year RCLS released RCLS Mobile, which is a piece of software that goes on any type of phone and it basically puts your library in your pocket. Through this mobile application you can place holds on books, select a pick-up location, you can directly e-mail or call your library, you can get a map to show you where your nearest library is. You can download directly to this device e-books and audio books and when you're in a bookstore you're able to turn your camera, the phone on your camera into a barcode scanner which, by scanning the ISBN barcode on a book, will tell you if your library has a copy so that you can go to your library to pick it up and if the library has it you can then automatically place a hold on it and it'll be there within two or three days. So, we're not in competition with stores but we think we should share.

    You asked what you can do besides money. Well, two things come to mind. One is Statewide purchasing of electronic databases - and our State Librarian addressed this - is critical because what it does is provides a platform of access to electronic resources for everybody in the State that libraries and library systems can then build upon, which is what we do. And the other thing that you can do is you can -- and we've been working on this for a number of years relatively unsuccessfully, that is to do Statewide negotiation for the purchase of electronic databases so that libraries can then get the
better pricing. This is done in many states in the country. We are not yet doing it and I understand there are some issues, and I'm not probably the best person to talk about the issues, about how that would go through State purchasing, but that would be very helpful. Right now there are several organizations that do this, but it's kind of breaking things up rather than having a consolidated approach to negotiating low cost for everybody in the State.

And Assemblyman, I'm sorry I'm going to mispronounce your name.

ASSEMBLYMAN ABINANTI: Abinanti.

MR. HUBSHER: You talked about books. I'm here to tell you books are not going away and I tell this to people all the time and one of the examples that I use about books not going away is that Amazon, the number-one seller of e-book content, started a book publishing company about two years ago. Their original prospective was only to publish out-of-print books. Even before they went live with their first offerings, they changed that perspective to include publishing new authors. I know that Amazon didn't do this because they're altruistic or because they love paper. They did this because there was money to be made.

Some current data that's beginning to come out is suggesting that e-book use is, if not flat lining, the growth curve is diminishing and what we are actually discovery is that there are people both young and old that still prefer to read paper. There's also some early data that suggests that people who read e-books don't
recall what they read as well as those who are reading the paper versions. Nobody really understands why, but I think that there's a tactile piece involved because we learn better when we use multiple senses rather than one and the act of turning pages, I think, helps consolidate memory and certainly, you know, in this context, libraries are not any time soon going to stop providing books. Thank you.

MS. MARILYN MCINTOSH: My name is Marilyn McIntosh and I am the Executive Director of the Monroe Free Library. It's an association library in Orange County and part of the Ramapo Catskill Library System. I was here last year and I had the opportunity to talk about the value and importance of libraries and the systems that make them truly amazing. As I looked over my testimony from last year I was struck by what I have to say is essentially the same. Libraries take a little and they double it and they triple it. They gather resources and then they make them multiply. They work cooperatively and purchase collectively and this concept has been at the heart of our mission since the days of Benjamin Franklin and I suspect far before that. It doesn't take much imagination to understand that when many pool their resources, the result is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Libraries, I feel, are at the heart of every vibrant community and are rock solid in both good times and in bad times.

In our community we recently experienced a terrible hurricane, if you came from Rockland you did, too, that devastated the lives of many New York residents. People found themselves without
power and not just for a day or two, but for a week or more and guess where they came to stay warm or to juice up their electronic devices? You're right, they came to the public library. We were relevant in the past. We are relevant now and we will be relevant in the future.

When I began my career 28 years ago, I know that's hard to understand, the Internet was in its infancy. And as the web grew beyond all our expectations, many proclaimed it to be the death nail for libraries and for paper, too, I might add, and we know that's not true. On the contrary, we are experiencing steady, strong growth. The only thing that has changed is how we approach our business.

My library belongs to the Ramapo Catskill Library, or RCLS, and this system is funded at the State level through taxpayer dollars. As a taxpayer myself I know what a great investment my dollars are providing for the population at large. If I could direct the use of my taxpayer dollar I would take a large percentage of it and I would give it to systems. Why? Because our systems are shining examples of how centralized operations, purchases and services save money and enhance product. Isn't that what we're all being asked to do? "Do more with less" could be the motto of library systems in New York State.

There's a slight problem, however. Because our systems are not being totally funded according to law and because they've had a long history of belt tightening, they have come to a very troubling financial situation. My system, RCLS, has had to begin charging a service fee to all its libraries in order to meet their financial
obligations. This then to me means that my taxpayer dollars for library service are, in essence, being paid double.

Today I'd like to thank you for providing the opportunity to give us a voice, a voice that I hope that you all will carry to the pertinent State agencies causing policymakers to understand that our amazing library systems are in great need of attention and support. It's my understanding that the Governor is making cuts in every department except for perhaps health and education and I believe that libraries fall under -- well, we are in the State Education Department and, indeed, we provide ample evidence that we educate as well as provide culture and recreation to any and all that walk freely into our buildings. Whether it's help finding a job or ensuring that reading levels are maintained and exceeded during the summer months or providing digital literacy for those who have to compete in an ever-changing technical environment, we are committed to educating our public.

As I asked last year, I respectfully ask you again to consider the value systems and libraries add to the quality of life in New York State and to help us help our citizens make New York State the best place to live in the United States of America. Thank you very much.

MS. CLAUDIA DEPKIN: Good morning. I'm Claudia Depkin. I'm the Director of the Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library in Rockland County. I'm also the President of the Leadership and Management Section of the New York Library
Association and I'm the Chair of the Director's Association of my library system, Ramapo Catskill Library System.

American author Isaac Asimov once wrote, "I received the fundamentals of my education in school but that was not enough. My real education, the super structure, the details, the true architecture I got out of the public library. For an impoverished child whose family could not afford to buy books the library was the open door to wonder and achievement and I can never be sufficiently grateful that I had the wit to charge through that door and make the most of it."

In New York State, the backbone of all our public libraries are the library systems that are funded by the State. You don't need me to tell you the history of public library systems or how they get funded, others have already taken care of that more eloquently. What I'm here to do today is to tell you why public library systems are important to your constituents even if they don't know anything about how or why library systems exist. Now, Haverstraw King's Daughter Public Library serves a population of approximately 30,000 and we have stable funding through our special legislative district status. Our customers, which are the general voting public, decide whether we receive a budget increase from year to year. When we do a good job we get a yes vote. I'm happy to report that our budgets have passed.

So why am I here? If you look behind the success of that good job we're doing, you'll see that RCLS plays a large role in
our success. The library system helps us stretch our public's dollars by providing opportunities for group purchasing of things we use every single day like paper, computers, computer software and research databases so that people can come into our building or even stay at home and get what they and their families need to succeed. The library system helps our management team by providing real assistance with things like construction grant proposals and e-rate discounts, projects that result in direct dollars coming to us to complete vital projects such as the installation of solar panels, summer reading program funding and refunds on our telecommunications fees through the government.

The library system provides expertise in guidance on things like the annual report to the State, legal concerns and questions about our own funding structures which, in turn, helps us to make the case for stable library funding in our home communities. The library system provides technical know-how to troubleshoot our computers, build our networks, manage our Internet traffic and catalog and circulate our thousands upon thousands of library titles so that our patrons when they come in our doors, our librarians are able to find what patrons want on our shelves, get it in their hands and make their day.

The library system provides delivery of library materials so that patrons in the Haverstraw library, for instance, can borrow items from public libraries two counties away or even farther, but part of the same system, savings us tax dollars while still
providing access to the information or entertainment library users want.

So, what can you do? For each year the State doesn't fully fund the public library systems, we see a bit of those benefits I just mentioned getting chipped away. Even with the 20 percent reduction in staff in recent years and the elimination of programs such as the newspaper reading service for the visually impaired and a desktop publishing service for member libraries, RCLS has had to implement a service fee to members to help offset their shortfall. That means your constituents are paying twice for services that aren't quite up to par. They're paying their taxes at the State level, a tiny amount of which gets apportioned to public library systems, and they're paying their taxes at the local level, a portion of which come to us. Please, fund library systems fully based on the State Education Law formulas approved in 1990, use current census figures in those calculations so that our library systems, our public libraries and our patrons enjoy the full benefit of stepping through Asimov's door of wonder and achievement into the public library and into an unimagined future of success and well-being. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you. A few brief comments and maybe one question. I'm going to be a little contrary here, forgive me, but it's just like feedback and the rationale for additional funding based on we should be treated as the schools, I don't think is helpful to you, but that's just my opinion, all right. But I heard that. But if a Legislature, our colleagues, are sitting there and
they say we have to fund schools, health or libraries, what do you think the priority order is? And I think you have goodness in yourself and that was the first message we heard from the State Education Department and we didn't hear it from them the law. Personally, I don't know as if my colleagues care about that law. You have been saying to us follow the law for the last five or ten years. We don't follow the law. We're not going to follow the law and we're going to determine how much money we give you.

So, I think, just my own opinion, you are better off rather than saying the law says this, give us this amount of money according to the law to say we do all these great things and when you hold up your phone and show me all these services and I can get any book immediately and reserve it if I'm in the bookstore is, I think, a stronger, a stronger message. So I don't like the -- personally, now; but I ask you to consider it. I don't like the rationale for additional support based on this is what the law says according to formula or we should be treated exactly as schools because the schools would say we have been treated very poorly also, but do as you will.

Thank you for answering our questions. They were right on and I thought that example of all the technology that is used is very important and I think your message, which we've heard before and I think we all do agree on, is that you are the poster child for collaboration, especially through technology.

And with that I want to ask you the question and this is my only question: What involvement have you had with the
Governor's economic development councils? Have you around the State been sitting on those, because you are the poster child, you can tell all of these other entities how to work together in a non-provincial way and you can play an important role in bringing those entities for economic development together. So do you have a sense of how it went, maybe in your area what you're doing because much of your testimony referred to those virtues that they, in fact, want within the economic development councils.

MR. HUBSHER: Well, I don't believe there's any library people on those economic councils. They weren't appointed to them; however, I know that I and the other system directors in the Hudson region, the mid-Hudson region did attend various meetings. I was just at a meeting on Tuesday night for a sustainability plan that was developed and what we brought to those meetings, because we read the reports and so on, libraries were not mentioned in them necessarily or at all and we were able to get them in their final report - at least the Economic Development Council - to include the mention of library as part of the education infrastructure so at least we got into the plan in our region.

And on the sustainability -- at the sustainability meeting, again, it was a 273-page document which I got three days before the meeting. I did manage to get through it and I noticed again that libraries were mentioned once and the context that the library was mentioned was that they were going to create these regional resource centers with a physical library in it so I made a point of going to that
meeting to let them know that they already have a couple hundred libraries within their area that they should be partnering with instead of creating it and that, in my opinion, it was not really good sustainable management to be creating a new facility when facilities already exist to do exactly what they were hoping to do. They could provide the information and we would provide the resources and the response I got from the committee members was that yes, that was a good idea and that's what they were hoping to do was to work with libraries. So we'll see how that plays out.

But we were ignored in the creation of those economic development councils initially. I'm not sure that we were on the Governor's radar at that time, I'm not sure. When I say "we," I mean libraries were on the Governor's radar. I'm not sure we still are. Libraries clearly are part of economic development. You may have noticed my accent or people tell me I have an accent. I'm from Canada and my previous job was at the Cornwall Public Library in Ontario and my library worked very closely with the economic development department of the city and we were slowly but ultimately we were embraced as part of economic development because we were able to convince the community and the City Council that we help people find jobs, we work with entrepreneurs, libraries do that and that libraries are part of the economic development. I had the privilege of moving our library from just outside the downtown core to within the downtown core and that resulted in a revitalization of the downtown. And I know that -- we were told that it had to do with the
library coming in and opening up our parking lot to the business community. Our parking lot backed -- a number of stores on Main Street backed into our parking lot. They had never had their back doors open to the public. Those doors were open to the public and we worked very closely with the business community and at the end of it just before I left to come to Ramapo Catskill we were able to garner a million dollars in provincial funding for -- under a smart cities program that was housed in the library working in partnership with the city's economic development.

Why am I telling you all this? Because I don't think people understand -- and as a librarian, I take personal responsibility on behalf of my profession. We've done a pretty poor job of communicating to people that we are, for one, an end designation. There's data on this. People go to the library as their primary place to visit and then on the way home or maybe on the way to the library they drop in at the store to do some grocery shopping or pick up a bag of chips or whatever. So, we drive business into communities and, hence, it's a good idea to have libraries in the cores of communities because it brings business in and we are available. We are business incubators. Most of our libraries have lots of resources for business people. We encourage business people to come in and use those resources and we certainly can play a dynamic role in economic development.

For one thing, what we can do for organizations is allow them to do what their primary purpose is and let us do the
information stuff because that's what we do. So they don't have to reinvent the wheel, we already have those wheels. We need to now make sure that everybody in our communities is aware of that and will come to us so that when they have an idea for something in the community they should pick up that phone and call the library director and I know that these two folks here would embrace that and say, Great. How can we provide you meeting space? What can we do to help you? What resources do you need? We can get them for you. And if people start understanding that, it'll turn things around in terms of people's perception of libraries. And I always tell people that perception is nine-tenths of reality so it doesn't matter if it's true or not but if people perceive something and right now the perception is we don't need libraries because they have Google. That's not an answer to anything.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Well, two points. I think that, you know, the effort should be made to get the -- especially the systems involved with these economic development councils for all the systems can add to those economic development efforts on a regional basis. And secondly, that's where the Governor has consolidated all the grants. So in the Capital Region when I attended the council here, they prioritized all of the grants and who would get the grants, whether it was the local colleges or whatever, many on a cooperative basis or entities joining together. So I think that is a source of funding for you and an advancement of your mission.

Well, thank you very much.
Phil.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: I think the point you made about the collaboration and working with the business community is very important and I think -- before coming up for the hearing for this I met with some of the library officials in our region because they couldn't come up for the testimony and the thing we talked about is when we were mentioning earlier about trying to partner with Workforce New York and the job training because trying to touch those rural areas is sometimes they're often overlooked and people can't get to because if they don't have a job and they don't have a car and they can't get into the area where the job training center is they can go to the local library.

The point I was trying to make is the more they reach out and do this collaboration I think to partner with the business community is a very important component of that. It's showing a business what you can have to offer them to help them focus on their main priorities, as you said, because there's not enough resources to go around and the fact of the matter is collaboration, cooperation and you've been doing it in your system and I think the more we can get that happening all across the State is a good thing whether it's -- I mentioned our libraries system people going, becoming part of the Chambers if they're not part of the Chambers of Commerce, going in and putting presentations into the local association groups, whether it's rotary clubs or different things like that just to kind of get the word out to people who are in business how they can be valuable because I
think we're trying to do a better job of getting the word out of the services and the value libraries have in our local communities, but the more we can partner and have that collaboration and get the business community support as well, I think it's just going to help our efforts and that message so I commend you in what you're doing and keep it up, please.

MR. HUBSHER: Can I just say a word? To address your question about not -- with my comment about being treated like education, perhaps my intent wasn't clear. I think we've heard that the Governor has said that everything is going to be cut except education and health and that he was looking at the possibility of education and health getting a four percent increase. That's the context I was making that statement that -- because in previous years - in the last five years when the cuts were meted out, everybody was talking about sharing the pain but, in fact, if you looked carefully at the data, libraries shared a disproportionate amount of the pain compared to other institutions. And I don't want to get into a competition for the pie, I get that. But if we are part of education, and we believe we are, we clearly play an educational role throughout the lifetime of an individual, then we should be treated like education rather than as a separate entity in that context that we are part of education infrastructure and if the goal is to make sure that we have an educated population, we're certainly clearly a part of that, an ongoing part.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you. Thank you all. If you e-mail me, I'll send you my response.
Our next presenter is Terry Kirchner, the Executive Director of the Westchester Library System.

MR. TERRY KIRCHNER: Joining me today actually is the WS Board President, Dave Donelson, but he's also a member of the library community and he serves on our Harrison Public Library board so he comes with multiple perspectives.

I'm just going to mention a couple of comments and let Dave do most of the talking because I think that will be much more interesting. I just want to make one observation. From a system perspective one of the things that I have discovered over the past year is that actually the tax cap legislation has actually increased the value of systems to the members in many ways. Clearly, the municipalities are struggling with how to meet their own budget constraints. One of the great things about a system is that we're able to sort of look at what some of the new needs are of the member libraries based on the fiscal reality and come up with new solutions for those challenges.

And in Westchester, one of the things that we've been able to do is really look at our role in terms of collections. What are ways that we can really help the libraries with one of the core elements which is the collection. We certainly don't want to take away their responsibility for having a collection that meets their communities' needs, but we can supplement. So we're really able to help the libraries kind of use their resources more effectively locally, from a regional perspective.

Just to touch quickly on Sandy, since that's something
that's on people's concerns. In Westchester, we were very fortunate that there was minimal physical damage but, clearly, challenges with electricity and cable, the Internet and one of the great things that we were able to do as a system is really step up and be the spokesperson for our member libraries. We have 38 libraries, 44 locations in Westchester County. We were able to work directly with our connections in ConEd and NYSEG but also with Cablevision and LightPath and make them understand that the libraries are relief centers. These are important institutions that are going to help the community and we were able to have most of our libraries up very, very quickly. A couple of our libraries never went down, but those that did go down we were able to then post information to the communities about the expected time when they would have power, when they would have cable and it allowed the member libraries themselves to act as partners in ways that they hadn't anticipated.

An example would be Chappaqua. It was actually down for, I'd say, about ten days but meanwhile the other libraries nearby Pleasantville, Mt. Kisco did have power so they were able to really relieve some of the pressure from the Chappaqua communities by helping them understand that nearby there are facilities that could accommodate their needs. So, it's just one of the roles that the system plays with the communication aspect as well.

I do want to mention that we love to be creative. We love to really think about ways to partner differently. And at WLS we've been looking both at our library systems as partners so we are in
discussion with the Queens Library for some cataloging services. We receive lots of materials in foreign languages. We speak a lot of foreign languages. We do a lot of foreign languages, but quite honestly, Queens is the guru in foreign language cataloging so let's really find a way to use some of their expertise and more cost effectively process our own materials for our member libraries.

With NYLA, the New York Library Association, they're taking the lead on digital literacy for all of us because clearly digital literacy is one of the big challenges. It's not enough to put the computer down, as you said, but really, how do we train staff and the public at the same time so that we really understand how to use the resources more effectively.

And I think one of the other comments I just want to make about the economic communities is that as a system we are able to engage with some of the regional partnerships in a way that the individual member libraries cannot. At WLS, we're very active in the Business Council of Westchester, the Westchester County Association, the Non-profit Association of Westchester and with the Westchester County as a government. They are one of our strongest partners and one of our roles is to really figure out how can we leverage our strength as a system so that we can help services to be brought into the member libraries. And Dave will talk a little bit more about that. And I do want to mention that we actually are very strong partners with our local one stop. It's the Westchester Putnam one stop but it's really about ways to allow individuals who are financially
challenged and emotionally and physically challenged to have the one
stop facility be in their own local community so that they don't have to
find ways to go 45 minutes to do these services. And we've been able
to do that so it's been great.

Dave.

MR. DAVE DONELSON: Well, thank you, Terry, and thank you, Chairman Reilly, and members of the Committee. As Terry mentioned, I do wear a couple of hats. One is as President of the Westchester Library System and another as a trustee of the Harrison Public Library where I'll be addressing the town council this evening regarding our budget for next year. But I do wear, also, a third hat, Assemblyman Abinanti, that makes books near and dear to my heart. I am an author. That's what I do for a living. I've written eight books and a lot of magazine articles and so I hope they stick around for a long time.

I'd like to thank you all for the opportunity to report on how State funding has contributed to the growth of library services in Westchester. I am a library layman, there's no question about that, but I've served as a trustee since 2003 and I've seen from the inside just how important State funding is to the Westchester Library System and to our member libraries. It's one of the elements, one of the principal elements to help us carry out our mission to empower our libraries and help them empower their communities and as I say, I've seen that from both sides, from both the system side and from the individual libraries side. On behalf of the trustees and the other
volunteers with whom I serve, I thank you for your past support and for your support in the future.

New York State funding represents about 38 percent of our funding at WLS. It's a powerful driver for growing our services. As Terry mentioned, we do a lot of collaboration and cooperation with other entities, both public and private, to carry out our mission. State funding helps make that happen. It supports our economic, educational and quality of life initiatives. We work with a wide range of collaborative partners. We serve a very diverse community, as you know. We also have almost two mini-programs to discuss so I'm going to talk really about three quickly that gives you some examples of how specifically we use State aid to carry out our mission and empower our libraries to empower their communities.

One is the Learning Ambassadors Program which we started last year. This provides summer training and employment opportunities for youths aged 14 to 19 in our communities. Most of these participants, by the way, reside in economically disadvantaged communities in Westchester. The participants are trained in communication, in library skills and in technical skills, then they fulfill a variety of roles in our member libraries in paid positions during the summer, such as helping with the summer reading program, with teen reading programs and even helping adults in computer workshops. As we all know, if you want to teach adult how to use a computer you go find a 14-year-old because they're the best teachers.

The 27 ambassadors in this program last year not
only earned a paycheck but they reported back an increase to us in their self-confidence, in their skills in both technology and in literacy and in their intention to excel even greater in school. Numerous local agencies teamed with WLS. We couldn't do this by ourselves, but we were kind of the spark plug that made it happen, if you will. The Mt. Vernon Youth Bureau, our member libraries who hire and utilized these students, the Great Potential Program at SUNY Purchase and Upward Bound at Mercy College were just some of our partners in that endeavor.

Another program moving slightly up in the age level and demographic is our GED Connect Program which, again, I believe started three years ago, if I recall correctly. This is a technology-based volunteer-driven program that helps adult learners obtain their GED degrees. WLS created and supports an online portal. We do use technology for this, but that portal is designated specifically for low literacy users. You know, one of the problems with technology is that you have to be fairly literate to use it so we designed a tool specifically for low literacy users. That's www.firstfind.org and that allows for 24/7 access to the tools to help these people get their GED.

But we didn't stop there. We also trained volunteers, as many as 40 of them at a time, to provide one-on-one learning support for students at eight of our participating public libraries: Greenburgh, Mt. Kisco, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, Ossining, Peekskill, White Plains and Yonkers all participated in this. And
since the program began demand has grown steadily. Local partners working with WLS on this initiative include the Westchester Community College in Peekskill, Westhab in Mt. Vernon and Neighbors Link in Mt. Kisco, which is an interesting partnership there because we realized one of the problems with some of the members of that community, which has a large immigrant population, is that the women in the immigrant community have difficulty participating in things like getting their GED because they have no childcare so we teamed up with Neighbors Link in Mt. Kisco to provide childcare so that the women in that community could advance.

And then the third program I would like to talk about quickly is the Senior Benefits Information Center where we help residents aged 60 and older understand and apply for Medicaid and other benefits that help them lead healthier and happier lives. The Medicare Rights Center is one of our partners as is the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services. We make this program available at eight of the libraries in Westchester: Greenburgh, Mt. Kisco, New Rochelle, Peekskill, Port Chester, Ryebrook, Shrub Oak, Tarrytown and Yonkers. In 2011, the SPIC program received a National Association of County's Achievement Award for its contribution to effective county government.

Now, these are just some of the programs we've been able to make happen as a result of State aid to and support for the Westchester Library System and our member libraries. Another big driver and another very useful tool is our economic development
efforts. This has long been supported by WLS and our member libraries. As Terry mentioned, we're active in the Westchester County Association, in the Business Council and we even started a business advisory council of our own at the library system level where we have about a dozen members of the local business community who talk to us about the problems they face, the problems they see that our communities are facing from their perspective and how they feel that libraries can be an aid to them.

Now, among the another initiatives made possible in some part by State funding are our career counseling programs which is something we've been doing for 31 years in Westchester County in partnership with our local libraries. These programs, which originate with WLS and are administered and run by us, are available to the public at no cost and, as one could imagine, the demand is very high. In 2011, over 2,400 individuals participated in these programs. Historically, more than 90 percent of them rate the programs as excellent to good and 42 percent of those surveyed said that they did achieve some career advancement or improvement in their employment situation after attending one of these programs; we're very proud of that.

Terry mentioned our collaboration with the Westchester/Putnam One Stop; the public libraries in Greenburgh, Katonah, North Castle and Tarrytown have all established satellite locations for one stop to enable the people of Westchester to better utilize that particular program. And then there, of course, is
technology. We’re very proud of the technology infrastructure we provide with the assistance of the State aid that we receive as well, of course, as the support of our local libraries and the Westchester County government. WLS supports the technology infrastructure and the way we look at it that is an aid to economic development in Westchester County. Yes, it certainly enables our patrons to update their Facebook pages and to check to see what their friends are doing, but it also enables people to fill out job applications online, as other speakers have mentioned, to get library assistance in preparing resumes and calling on the wonderful librarians at our libraries to help them find resources to find jobs through online databases and things of that nature. WLS supports public computer work stations and wireless access at 44 sites throughout Westchester with nearly 1,000 terminals, making us the largest computer network in Westchester County.

Training and professional development through WLS is also a function in large part of State library aid. Library staff and trustees at the member libraries benefit from a range of training and professional development activities that they, quite frankly, could not achieve on their own. Recent workshops covered a multitude of topics including autism, compliance and governance issues, customer service, fundraising and grant writing, immigrant services, supporting special needs students and their families, social media, volunteer recruitment and working with at-risk youth. The goal of these workshops is to help libraries operate more effectively and more
efficiently in their communities. It's one of the most important functions that we fulfill as a system.

Finally, let me speak briefly about State Library Construction Grants which have, indeed, been put to good use in Westchester County. This year, WLS supported 14 library construction projects through the State program. These projects will allow libraries to create facilities that better meet the growing needs for community rooms and updated meeting facilities, to update and replace aging infrastructure at many of our libraries, to create 88 compliant facilities and to help address the growing role of libraries as relief centers during the time of catastrophe, as Terry pointed out. From an economic perspective, library projects, construction projects also, of course, contribute to the local construction economy and create jobs locally.

One of these 14 projects that is particularly near and dear to my heart when I put on my hat as a Harrison Public Library trustee because for the first time in 24 years, we received a State grant or will receive a State grant that will provide additional funding to allow us to construct a teen center in the Harrison Public Library which is something we do not currently have. Our teen center consists of a desk, a sign that says teen center and a bookshelf that stands about this high and it probably has 30 or 40 books on it. Once we complete this high-tech very attractive center in the basement of our library we will have something to be proud of. The State funding, by the way, helped attract private funding to make up the balance of
that. We did not tap into the Town of Harrison's budget to do that capital project. We're calling on them for some other things. Anyway, the State Library Construction Grants are certainly important to us.

Public libraries and public library systems have been and continue to be a good investment for the State of New York. By encouraging collaboration and using the leverage that State funding allows us, we're able to improve library service and help our public libraries operate more efficiently. The Westchester Library System saves the libraries in Westchester approximately $36 million annually through cooperative efforts, technology and other services made possible, in large part, by New York State funding.

We thank you for your past support. We strongly encourage the Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology to support an increase in library aid for the 2013-2014 State Budget and I'm more than happy, Chairman Reilly, to repeat the specific ask for $102 million in library aid and $20 million in State Construction Grants. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you very much. I don't have any questions myself, but I would just comment that all of your examples of the services that libraries provide are very important for us to hear and for the other members of the Assembly to hear. Our challenge is how do we get all that information to all our members. Again, part of that is for you to, on a very consistent basis, to be in contact with your Senators and Assembly people and keep
them aware of all the services that you provide. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Just one quick question and, really, kind of for everyone as we go forward with this, give us feedback. I'm really curious if there's more. The one gentleman mentioned about the Statewide database for purchasing and kind of helping, you know, local libraries in that area, but if there's other areas where you see or hear down the road whether, you know, now or down the road let us know where there's things that we can do that -- the State might be doing that might cause a problem for you to have some of the sufficiency and collaboration at the local level to kind of take those barriers away so you can do more and reach more people. So, if you have more suggestions and ideas on that as this process moves forward, I think that's something that we're always looking at to try to address and try to be helpful with.

MR. DONELSON: Certainly.

ASSEMBLYMAN ABINANTI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just take this opportunity to thank these two gentlemen and all of the speakers. I just want to reiterate what you were saying before. Thank you for coming today, providing us with the information. The level of the information is quite good. You're all making very good presentations. I would just also repeat what the Chairman has been saying. It's so important to get this message beyond us, out to the public and to the Governor's office and to the other legislators. You have a ready-made communications system. You have a lot of well-educated, highly motivated users of your
library systems and your libraries. I don't know that they ever think of communicating how important a library is to them. I think we have to get that message to them so that they can get the message back to everybody else.

Also, you have to find a way to get this -- and you're the best ones to do this to get this message out to those who don't regularly use the library. There are still a lot of people out there who think that a library is a place where you store books, you know, and they don't recognize the modern library is so different. I mean, as I said before, I think it's also a community center and you're making that point. It's one of the numerous -- the several community centers that we have in our communities. Towns and villages go through great effort to set up community centers, senior centers and whatever. In some small communities, the library may be the only place for that. In some of our larger communities there are several different ones, but they're all needed and they're all usually busy. But I think that message has to get out to those who don't use the services. That's the only thing I could say.

So thank you for coming up here from Westchester; you made the same trip that I did. It's good to see you up here.

MR. DONELSON: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you.

Next we have a panel, we give them special kudos for traveling here since they come from Buffalo. Thank you very much and since there's three of you and I only have a couple names I'll let
you introduce yourself and your title as you give your presentation.

MS. MARY JEAN JAKUBOWSKI: Good afternoon. My name is Mary Jean Jakubowski and I'm the Director of the Buffalo and the Erie County Public Library and with me today to my right, your left, is Sheryl Knab, the Executive Director of the Western New York Library Resources Council and to my left, Tom Dindeman, who is the Executive Director of the Nioga Public Library System. And we come before you today as a united front in our presentation and sincerely appreciate the opportunity to speak with you.

As you've heard and will continue to hear throughout all of these testimonies, libraries play a significant role in communities. They are cultural hubs, centers of education, providers of technology, partners in workforce development, economic engines and, yes, they are even entertainment venues. In times of emergencies, libraries step up to the plate, recognizing the value of the resources to the community while providing a sense of security and normalcy to residents. While there is no comparison in Western New York to the devastation which occurred in New York City and on Long Island, Western New York has had its share of emergencies where libraries have become command centers for emergency personnel, shelters for victims and gathering sites for families of the victims. I'm speaking in particular of when Flight 3407 occurred a couple of years ago, our infamous snowstorms and our prolonged power outages.

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Each week, 2.5 million people visit libraries throughout New York State. Seventy percent of New York libraries serve as their community's option for free Internet access and 98 percent of New York libraries have helped someone look for or apply for a job. Public library systems are the drivers of consolidated and cooperative services, ensuring member libraries, access to the tools necessary to meet their residents' needs. They provide automated circulation systems that enhance the processing, loan and delivery of library materials by leveraging funds and negotiating group purchases of materials, databases and services. Systems provide cost-efficient delivery services, moving materials in and between their libraries. They provide or enable their members to offer high-speed Internet access, technology programming and regionalized collection development. And systems offer continuing education opportunities as well as physical space for community organizations to conduct meetings and training sessions.

Library systems, such as the Western New York Library Resources Council, one of the nine New York 3R systems, provides the means for libraries and other library systems to collaborate and work together to provide services such as "Ask Us 24/7", a Statewide information service staffed solely by librarians from around the State and backed up by libraries from around the country. 3R systems provide libraries of different types the opportunity to share information and build off of each other's strengths so the educational mission of teaching information literacy is
grounded in services in every library to assist New York residents from age preschool through college from careers to retirement. 3R systems promote collaboration and partnerships developing and leveraging consortia initiatives on a wide variety of topics and services.

As you've heard, and I'm sure you will hear again, historically when economic times are difficult, the use of libraries increases dramatically. From the Great Depression through the difficult times of the 1980's right up to the present day economic crisis, the demand by our citizens for quality library services has skyrocketed. Every day libraries are being confronted with the crucial task of providing more for less. Current levels of State funding are equal to levels received in 1993. That's 1993, an entire childhood ago. As a parent of a child who was born in 1995 and heading off to college this coming fall, I would love to have college tuition rates at 1993 levels. I'm sure you would sincerely agree that as a result of these reduced levels funding has impacted services, resources and hours of operations to all libraries.

Last year for the first time in many years we received a slight increase in library aid. Please know this was sincerely appreciated and on behalf of all of us in the room today, I thank you. Please be assured that this money was not wasted. For example, for every $1 in State aid in accordance to the New York Library Association, every dollar of State aid to public library systems provide and yield a $12.50 return on services. We sincerely implore your
consideration to reinstate library funding to its top level of $102 million, not for those of us who sit in this room, but for the residents of New York State who are demanding our services. Thank you.

MR. THOMAS DINDERMAN: Just a couple comments from the Western part of the State and we are part of the great State of New York, we're not part of the Rocky Mountains and all that good stuff. Our local tag line that we use for libraries is "Information is the new currency and libraries are the banks that provide that currency."

A couple of comments in regards to the questions that were raised by the panel. All library systems, public library systems were created in the '50s and early '60s. We are one of the last chartered in 1959 and we've been providing regional approaches in terms of purchasing, computers, cooperation with computer training, running data circuits between cross-county lines and all that. And I attended a Niagara County legislative meeting just Tuesday night and their big coup was that they finally got some cooperation with the Orleans County Legislature for a common enhanced 911 power to be built near Orleans/Niagara County line and they use that as an example of regionalism. We've been doing that for 54 years across the great State of New York. We're experienced. We loan materials bought from Niagara Falls to Batavia to Le Roy to Albion. We provide delivery services for those materials among those three counties. What other services provided locally or the State can say they have that type of relationship and have been in that type of
business for so long? We're proud of that cooperation and, of course, we'll continue doing that.

We do have -- Nioga was lucky enough to get a State grant for computer literacy where we have mobile training labs that hit the 21 public libraries, plus also the workforce. We have a working relationship with the two local workforce folks. When they're closed we pick up the training; in fact, we actually trained their staff on basic computer skills. So that cooperation has been there. We've worked with local agencies for years. I've been in the business since 1975 and what really ticks me off is when the term -- when folks suggest "think out of the box." I could suggest to you that the library community created the box. We're continuing looking for relationships, extra revenue streams continually.

Now, in terms of the working with economic development councils, we've tried to crack those ten councils since they've been created. We gave testimony, they pat us on the head and say, *You're doing a good job*, but my question to you is how do we get into the intersanctums of these folks? You know, it just doesn't work. We tell the feel-good stories. We go to their meetings. We give written testimony. We try to work through our working partners in the business community that are part of those councils but then when we get the 300-page report, we're patted on the head and we'll say, *Well, if you want a library card, go over there.*

So we've been doing a lot of the stuff for 54 years. The local communities have been trying, begging, telling the
feel-good stories -- not being aggressive; it's not in our genes to be aggressive. I don't even know what aggressiveness means, but we've been doing it since I've been -- 38 years since 1975 and we hit that stone wall and when I talk to our local politicians at the city, village, county legislators and the State reps, I know you can tell us we should be telling our citizens on all this. We have petitions, we have letters, we have all this good stuff, but we kind of lose it somewhere in the communications line and all that. So a lot of the stuff we've been doing. So, that's it. A lot of the stuff we're current on the technology angle, all 23 public library systems have mobile apps to their services. They're using the social networking, so we're current with that. We're doing a good job and our problem is that we're reaching a limit of serving our communities. And I mean, if we had the whole communities use our systems we'd be overburdened on what we're doing now.

So, that's my tail of woe from the great part of the Western part of the State, doesn't snow in the summer so any other comments.

MS. SHERYL KNAB: I just wanted to give you an example of my constituency is not the public. My constituency are our member libraries and our library systems and my organization serves 72 libraries and library systems which counts about 550 buildings. Now one of the -- and I want to just highlight one of the projects or it's more than a project, it's a program that we've been doing for the last two years. We have librarians from the high school
libraries working with librarians from the academic institutions and in Western New York, we have 23 academic institutions. So there's quite a lot in those six counties and we have facilitated meetings between those librarians from the academic libraries and those from the high school libraries. And one of their missions is to understand what happens between the time the child goes from the high school to the college where they've lost some of their information literacy skills, why there is a disconnect. And so what they've been doing is creating new programs for administrators and as well as principals to attend to have them understand that there is a disconnect, to work together to have tours between the high schools and the libraries so they can see what is expected in the academic environment as far as research.

That's just a very small program that we're doing but it's a really critical one because it demonstrates the difference between what is perceived as libraries. They are working together. Our academics are working with our high school libraries and our public libraries and there are public librarians on that committee that are doing this so there is tremendous collaboration between the different types.

Now, one thing you also need to understand is I also serve museums and small cultural organizations and archives and we facilitate them, conversations with them to bring them into other conservations that we've been having with resource sharing, with shared collections, with facilitating access to all of our different historical collections, and New York Heritage is one aspect, and my
colleague will probably mention that as well. So we are collaborating and we are working in very different sectors and I work with very different types of libraries and that is why library systems are so important is because we can facilitate those connections.

MS. JAKUBOWSKI: I just wanted to add, you had asked how you can help all of us, which I think is really -- it's a wonderful feeling to have people from the Assembly asking that and with regard to the economic, you know, the economic drivers and the one stop centers, I can only speak from the Western New York region. I can tell -- and I piggy-back on what Tom had said with regard to sort of getting into those. They're great and they're wonderful to cooperate with, but I will say to you when we have made significant amounts of offers and had discussions with such entities to have things, *Well, wouldn't it make sense to have you? We have space. We'd love to house you in our libraries. We would love for you to come to our libraries and we can set up a program from our libraries.* The response that we have gotten is, *Nope, we're separate entities and we're right up the street so we're not going to do that.* And we've heard that throughout Erie County which is 1,045 square miles so, obviously, they're not right next-door to every one of our libraries; in fact, I can only speak of one that they are significantly close to.

But there really has been -- so, what I'm asking for you is to help us to have those entry points and encourage from their end, when they're coming for State funding to say, *Have you ever thought about working with the libraries?* How do we get that
information to them to say, *You know, here's another significant center of resource where many of the things are duplicative services or could be considered duplicative services and let's leverage our expertise.* That is what we are doing in Western New York on many, many, many levels with our cultural agencies amongst ourselves, et cetera, is sharing our services and sharing our expertise in order to be economically sound, but allowing us to provide the activities and services that people are demanding of us. So that would be a significant help.

**ASSEMBLYMAN ROBERTS:** Could you make an example of something that you feel as though you would be compatible with?

**MS. JAKUBOWSKI:** I'm sorry, say that again.

**ASSEMBLYMAN ROBERTS:** Could you give me an example of an agency that you feel as though you would be compatible with?

**MS. JAKUBOWSKI:** Well, I can tell you that in the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System we're working together with a multitude of cultural institutions who provide a variety of services, different types of literacy agencies and services and we are extremely compatible. We have very, very similar missions. They have skill sets and abilities, teaching literacy services through art, for example. The staff that we have can certainly -- we provide literacy services, but taking it from another angle where there would be a creative angle is something that we don't have the expertise on but it's
been demonstrated to work. To partner, again, with -- we have something called Project Flight which is a literacy agency. They are actually on site with us. They receive overruns of materials from various publishing houses. We help to distribute those and try to get a book into every child's hand in the Western New York community, so we have all kinds of partners like that.

We are currently creating something called Space to Create in our central library where we are going to be bringing together cultural institutions, various smaller cultural institutions together for things for educational purposes, for creative space, for entertainment space, exhibit space, things of that nature where we can all leverage, again, our services and our personnel so there are not duplicative services, cutting down on the administrative costs in order to provide the services that are being asked of the libraries, as well as these cultural institutions.

MR. DINDEMAN: I think every public library system, all 23 of us are doing, each one of us --

MS. JAKUBOWSKI: Absolutely.

MR. DINDEMAN: If we poll we could give you examples. In our neck of the woods we have working relationships with Genessee Community College, Niagara Community College having their students come in either conducting computer literacy or we're training the kids to be -- training the tutor type of things. We're working with a local school which is supposedly funded by the great State of New York, they don't have a library so we're sending our
people out to establish a library to work with kids when they send them from New York City, Rochester, Syracuse because they don't have a mother. Their home environment is hostile so they shove them in the school and they forget about them. We're over there giving them story hours, we're trying to find, establish a small library.

So, that's just one example in Western New York.

MS. JAKUBOWSKI: Business groups utilize us all of the time to come in and provide the services.

MR. DINDEMAN: And it's duplicated across 23 areas --

MS. JAKUBOWSKI: Absolutely.

MR. DINDEMAN: -- across the State of New York or charter services area.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROBERTS: Thank you.

MR. DINDEMAN: And we represent people who are powerless. They don't have the political influence for whatever reason and we just lose our message. And I agree with Chairman Reilly that we've tried everything. You know, working with our local officials, working with the local folks to get in. I mean, the prime examples are the economic development councils. We tried to crack that nut -- informally, formally and get mentioned and all this and it's lost. We're washed out and we've tried everything from back-dooring it to all that good stuff and you mentioned here, economic development councils across the State of New York.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: First of all, I think you
brought up a very important issue. It's what I'll call not the exact, not the correct term but a global issue, a long, a comprehensive, a very comprehensive-type issue that's not certainly going to be solved tomorrow, but let me comment briefly on it because, obviously, I recognize the sense of frustration. And I would say for Tom, when you asked the question, Well, what could we do to integrate ourselves into these economic development councils, a word that came to my mind was "perseverance," but, of course, you've been persevering for 38 years and I understand that, but I think you have to continue.

On the, if not bright at least slightly positive side is that you've come here today and I think that you and the other people coming here last year was important to -- beyond just a modest increase in funding. I think the Legislature became more supportive. Some of your issues came more to the front and I think that the library communities themselves had another opportunity to coalesce around a single message and strategy. So I thought all that was good.

What we can really do here is form a relationship with you because that's what we're about today. What we're about is the library community and the Assembly and us listening to you. And I, because I won't call myself passionate, but interested in the library community. I've been commenting too much but bear with me because I think the libraries are important and I do have commitment to them.

As I mentioned earlier just in answers, and these are long-range not an answer for tomorrow, I have some specifics, one or
two that we might do, is we have to energize public support. I'm going to be a moment here, bear with me. I've spent 28 years in cultural education in the Education Department and I admired the advocacy, lobbying, if you will, of the library community and they always develop very conceptual plans. They had this regions committee with their plans and they followed up and I thought they did a great job, but they weren't tremendously effective. And why that was I never even to this day quite understood. But what I think is lacking, as I mentioned previously today, is the 7,000 libraries, all the people working in those libraries and all those people that are served by those libraries supporting you. And if this is a political question, think about if those people were energized in support we, the politicians, would respond.

But for some reason I don't think that has coalesced and that we're effective in having that done, but I think this is a very important issue. One thing I will do, I'll write a letter as Chairman to the Governor - because every little bit counts - saying that it is my belief that the libraries have not been included in these economic development councils and how important it is and what they can provide, because you are, as we heard a number of times today, the poster child for collaboration through technology, that's how I summarize it anyway. But I think that in part, one, think of it in a positive way that you can work with your legislators, personal contact between your libraries and your legislators. You can get a single message out and I think that will be somewhat effective.
I would say conceptually, and this was a thought that I had before but it's one I think of all the time and it's a stretch, but I think maybe there's some validity to it -- technology is transparent when it works. So we just take this microphone for granted as we do -- 15 years ago there were no cell phones. Now everybody takes them for granted and so technology only works when we don't see it and that's almost the same as with your services and that's why you're not appreciated. So nobody sees really the infrastructure of the library systems and that computer thing and it works so well and, you know, I met a colleague today. We, who come here and are honest legislators working, we're not going to get any publicity for this today, but let one of us do something wrong and that will be publicized.

So you're doing all this good work and we've seen examples of all the various programs, but we can also look at the infrastructure and what you can provide and the best you get is a pat on the head but not a lot of publicity and recognition. So, that's a problem, too, that the problem being you're doing your job too well, all right, and I know this and I admit it, this is conceptual, and the only specific I'm giving you is one -- twofold. One, let's continue our relationship, we will work on what we hear today and, secondly, I will as a small effort write to the Governor and state what I believe is an important inclusion in the economic development councils, because I think those are the Governor's focus point for the regional development.

MS. JAKUBOWSKI: That would be wonderful.
Thank you very much.

MR. DINDEMAN: Also, as a personal side, since I'm the old guy around here, I've been maybe involved over the last 30 years eight or nine times in this type of testimony and all that and we had our local representatives, because I used to live in Buffalo, in Niagara Falls, is that it seems we lose our fight in the Democratic caucus. When you folks are meeting for the budget questions and all that, that no one is our advocate, per se. So, just as a personal favor to the library community, if the people, representatives on this Committee could stand up and just reiterate, be our messengers, be our advocates in your caucus when you get down to the nitty-gritty and horse swapping and all that that, you know, Libraries are doing a good job, maybe we could do something for you. And I had three or four different Democratic Assemblymen tell me that, that's where you folks lose it. The Senate was generous with us in proposals and when you guys get together to discuss your differences, that's where we seem to lose it. And we're way down the list after giving money to the Buffalo Bills for their staying in Western New York.

So that's what I'd like to ask you as a personal favor for us, that you can do for us. You've asked us what thing legislative you could do for us, but be an advocate at those key points when legislation is passed in the caucuses and your joint House meetings with the Senate to, you know, don't forget us because I think you're good folks. You represent your constituencies excellent. We thank you for your support but if you could take it to that next level when
your folks are trading horses and all that stuff is that give us a helping hand. It would be greatly appreciated. And, again, come visit us in Western New York. It doesn't snow in July.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: I will say that one person that previously did that was one of my predecessors as Chair of this Committee who I heard was on her way, Sandy Galef, but we would be in Conference talking about agriculture or transportation or whatever and she'd be talking about libraries; but I agree. We, in this Committee, have that responsibility to constantly bring that up.

MR. DINDEMAN: That would be so extremely helpful for us. I mean, we can do all this good stuff and tell you the feel-good stories, but if you would carry our banner into those meetings, just don't say, *Whatever, whatever, whatever,* I'd say it would be 1,000 percent helpful to us. And just a quick story, I'm a storyteller and people in the back are saying, *Here he goes again.*

Two or three years ago I went to a signing for Tim Russert's book when he was alive and Tim Russert was a press agent for Mario Cuomo. So, Mario Cuomo was in the Western New York area doing something so he came into Borders to sign the book so I went over, got Mr. Russert's signature, I went over to get the former Governor's to thank him and all this and he goes, *Hey how you doing,* and all this. He said, *Well, what do you do?* I said, *I'm a librarian.* He looked at me and said, *You're one of those,* and he turned around and went to his limo so I don't know if that's just I'm skewering that or whatever, but...
MS. JAKUBOWSKI: I think that was just you, Tom, sorry.

MR. DINDEMAN: That was my own --

MS. KNAB: Thank you very much. We really appreciate it.

MR. DINDEMAN: Thank you. No more stories.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: They're going to stop you, Tom. Thank you and enjoy your trip and thanks a lot. Thanks a lot for coming.

Our next panelist is Maureen O'Connor from Queens Library and she has the title, which I covet, senior advisor, that's what I hope to become.

MS. MAUREEN O'CONNOR: It's a great title. I'm the former Chief Operating Officer and now I'm working part time and, yes, I'm a senior and I've been giving advice for years but now people -- it's in my job title and people better listen. So, good afternoon. It's my pleasure today to be delivering remarks and testimony on behalf of Tom Galente, Queens Library's President and our CEO. Thank you, Committee and Chairman Bob Reilly, for this opportunity inviting us here today.

I'm pleased to join my colleagues today in sharing with you the value of public libraries. I personally want to thank you for your role in delivering a State budget last year which, for the first time in I think five years, included an increase in funding to libraries. We know that libraries are more important to New Yorkers than ever
before and this increase demonstrates that New York supports their continued growth and success. We hope it's the beginning of a sustained investment and see it as a turnaround.

I'd like to take a few minutes just to share with you some of the work that Queens has done in the past. A little background. Queens Library operates 62 community libraries, seven adult learning centers, a library for teens in Far Rockaway and a children's library discovery center in Jamaica. We serve a population of 2.3 million residents, over half have arrived in Queens recently and speak a language other than English at home.

In Fiscal Year 2012, we welcomed 12.5 million visitors, people coming to our libraries. On a daily basis it's over 35,000 people a day. More importantly, we provide free educational opportunities for every visitor and people of all ages from toddlers to senior citizens. In recent years we've expanded our job information, job search services and computer training classes. We've added more computers and computer sessions, offered more programs and had a larger program attendance than ever before. Last year, we offered 37,000 programs with over 700,000 participants. All of this bears mentioning as we accomplished this in an environment where, overall, the government funding continues to slide.

Despite huge restorations, last year there were enormous budget cuts proposed for the New York City libraries and there were huge restorations, but overall we still lost $2 million, bringing our City funding reduction -- since the downturn began in
2008 it's $15 million less than we used to have. On the State level, funding has been on a steady decline with over $1.5 million lost through 2011-2012 and last year we began to make up some ground with that 3 percent increase which we really appreciate, which added just over $122,000 to our operating fund. And reversing the downward trend was an incredible achievement for the State of New York. Unfortunately, the needs, as we've heard all morning, still remain great and the funding reductions are taking their tolls on public service. In the last year, the hours open and the library staff numbers have trended slightly downward and wait lists for popular books and other materials have grown. Our staff is stretched to the limit to deliver quality library services. Nevertheless, the State has historically played a critical role in the services and successes so thank you for your support and we've seen many successes delivering quality resources, programs and state-of-the-art facilities.

You asked for this hearing to talk about what we've done with the increased money and what we do with our State money. In Queens, we really lean heavily on State funding to maintain our collections and materials. And as we've heard throughout the morning and in response to some of your questions, the books and materials are the oxygen that supply life, but today there are so many other media and our materials budget, despite last year's increase, is still a shadow of its former self. We purchased 30 percent fewer books than we did in 2008. Many libraries are increasingly facing the impossible choice that we've had to between keeping the doors open and the number of
hours versus the materials on the shelves and it's not choice that no library wants to make and no library patron wants to deal with and face. It's particularly challenging in an age where materials budgets needs to cover not just print, but the growing availability of digital content. We stand at the crossroads where demand for e-books is on the rise but print materials remain the preferred method for many.

As an aside, an example of -- people have given other examples of technology and the one I'll use is a group that you might not think of, the homebound. We've had a service for many years, since the '50s, of providing books by mail, often large print, to homebound elderly or people with disabilities. In the past year or two, we've really expanded that because the other issue for many of the homebound is social isolation and now we're still supplying the books, but we also have Polycom so that they can have telephone book discussion groups and we're doing Skype with presentations, the kind that they can't get to the library to hear but... So, it's still -- it's expanding the program, it's better serving people's needs, but there's an increased cost to it.

For a library, the mission is to provide that free and fair access to information and no matter what the delivery method. We are technology agnostic, I guess you could say. We were the first place in the City to start loaning e-readers, so we are trying to keep up with the trends. Many of the Upstate suburban libraries are ahead of us. It's sheer volume, serving 2.3 million people.

State support has helped Queens in huge ways to
continue building state-of-the-art libraries that serve as community hubs for families, children, teens and seniors. Our State funding of the $14 million that the State had this year, Queens gets $1.2- and this year it's used for four communities. We use it, match it with City funding for construction. It helps to get that match to say that we have the State funding with Bellrose, Bayside, Fresh Meadows and Woodhaven. They're getting interior makeovers which is not cosmetic; for us, many of our buildings were built years ago. They're 7,500 square feet. They didn't have teen spaces. They didn't have technology. There's a lot of retro fitting and it allows -- with us, it allows for efficient technology for automating self-check so that we can make better use of our staff while also improving the services to people that they can get receipts from their books, they can return them 24 hours a day. They also bring the handicapped accessibility and they're comfortably designed and spaced and furnished so that they can be that community center that we want our libraries to be.

One of the things that -- Bob, that you specifically mentioned was hearing about Sandy and that's how I'm going to end my remarks is really talking about Queens was right there at the epicenter in the Rockaways and it's still devastated, but I've never been so proud. Our libraries, because we are community centers, were frankly there before the other first responders could be. We opened the Far Rockaway library with no heat and no lights and the staff were there and they were passing out -- not for books, and they weren't charging cell phones at that point because we hadn't been able
to get the generators in. They were passing out water and peanut butter and blankets because places like the Salvation Army were giving us that material to give out.

We have opened the libraries. It has taken a cost of, and I got this figure last night because we've certainly been calculating that, it's about $10 million to deal with the devastation of Hurricane Sandy. We had four libraries in the Rockaway Peninsula. Two of them just, really, under lots of water. It will take a long time to get them done. One of them, all of the windows just plain blew out. Books and materials floating down the street. That one is even going to take longer. What we've done in the short term is to immediately get service back in the area. We're using -- we have a mobile library. It used to be called the book mobile but it's really a mobile library. We went out and got the generators in that right away. We got generators in the buildings that we could open so that people could recharge their services, their devices and our reference librarians are asking those kinds of questions about helping people download FEMA applications or a reference question of, from an elderly women, *Here's my prescription and the pharmacy just washed away. What do we do and how can you help me with that?*

As the power is out for longer periods of time and people are in their apartments with no heat, coming to the library with the generators where it was warm but, also, they've got their kids in these homes with no television, no school and no activities and we were doing story hours and providing books. We have just opened a
site next to, adjacent to the Arverne Library, which is the poorest community in Queens. It's a trailer. It's a trailer with a port-a-potty and the staff are out there manning that and saying that this is the need. It's been an incredible response and, really, based on the things that I think we would have known that we were there first. We were giving advice to the City's human resource administration. They didn't have a presence there. We were able to introduce them to our landlord for the teen center, found them a building so that they could open a site. But they were people who used the library and people didn't seem to think that it was really unusual that we were doing that because that's where they came for so many of their information needs and this was just an extension of the information. So, very proud of that.

Despite our losses, we're committed to serving the communities for the long haul. As the needs change and recovery continues, libraries will remain the first places that families turn. We just saw that. We believed it, but now we've seen it. We'll continue to connect youngsters to enriching after-school programs that support their studies in school. We'll connect tens of thousands of teenagers at risk to a world of literature with adult supervision. We are the largest employer of teens in the Borough of Queens. We put them to work at meaningful jobs working with kids after school and helping people with computers. We serve the nearly 50 percent of foreign-born residents with cultural programs and education classes. We're the largest provider of adult literacy -- or the largest library literacy
program with the SOL throughout the country. And we'll help our customers get back to work by connecting thousands of job seekers with resume writing workshops, computer literacy and career counseling. We'll connect seniors and the homebound with programs and materials. We refer residents to affordable health care and life savings screening services, improving the overall health of the community and we'll continue to be the primary provider for computer access to the borough to bridge the digital divide.

With so much hanging in the balance for us at this time, we ask you again to prioritize libraries and increase the Statewide commitment from Albany. As I said, we are certainly users of and heartily support an increase in construction funding and with your support, we can put tools for success directly into the hands of our over 900,000 cardholders many more times a year. Again, on behalf of Tom Galante and Queens Library, I express my appreciation and would welcome any questions, particularly about Hurricane Sandy since we were there.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you.

Maureen, where is the money going to come from to rehabilitate the facilities that were destroyed by Sandy, especially like take the example of the four libraries that were about completely destroyed. What's the plans for the funding? Where will that come from?

MS. O'CONNOR: Well, we've seen that the Governor has talked about money, the Mayor is compiling numbers,
that's why ours were very factually based. We have to get them into the City. There's FEMA money that pays for some things. There's a giant match. It's probably not going to restore, certainly, everything that we need or have lost. There's the time delay. On an ongoing basis, the end that says we just felt like we can't abandon the Rockaway Peninsula, which is the neediest communities in Queens are along that peninsula, that's not going to be the construction money that's going to come back and support the trailer or the bus that's there. We're certainly looking to other sources but hope that it will be a combination of City, State and Federal that will enable us to rebuild these buildings.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: I imagine the Governor asked the library to compile a cost estimate for recovery?

MS. O'CONNOR: The Mayor did.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: And what was that?

MS. O'CONNOR: Ours is about $10 million.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: $10 million?

MS. O'CONNOR: Yes. I mean, they're costs that were just -- things that you would never anticipate, obviously construction being the largest, but just the end of -- initially, I mean, the devastation of this storm of having to send custodians hours away to get gas to run the generators, just the time commitment, the overtime commitment, staffing costs, things like that and we did. In those communities, as I mentioned, we've had to increase our hours slightly. Generally, we increased our hours to seven days a week
including on a holiday in the Rockaways because we felt we were so needed.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Questions?

Thank you very much.

MS. O'CONNOR: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Our next speaker is Jean Sheviak, Executive Director, Capital District Library Council.

MS. JEAN SHEVIAK: Good afternoon. My name is Jean Sheviak and I'm Executive Director of the Capital District Library Council based here in Albany. We're one of nine reference and research, resources systems that comprise the New York 3Rs Association and that's who I'm speaking for today. We've been serving the research needs of New York's library community for more than 40 years, one of the types of library systems in New York.

The New York 3Rs Association members currently include 276 college and university libraries, 460 hospital, museum, corporate and other specialized libraries, as well as library systems representing more than 5,000 school and public libraries. Our job is to help all of those communities and organizations work together both locally and Statewide to achieve measurable economies of scale and significantly increased quality of services. Our work is primarily funded through State aid to libraries which, as you've heard with every speaker, has been cut 20 percent from 2008 levels and these cuts have taken us to 1996 funding levels.

And a major topic of today's hearing was listed as the
impact of the State budget on library services. And we can assure you that those cuts are doing great harm. As examples, reduced systems staff means fewer training sessions, curtailed resource sharing means no inner-sharing of library materials for some researchers, fewer electronic resources means more students are using Google for their research rather than peer reviewed scholarship. We know for a fact that fewer books are being acquired by academic libraries, fewer research materials are available for health care professionals and far fewer history collections are being digitized for nyheritage.org.

Researchers and those preparing for those all-important technology jobs that we keep hearing the State hanging their hat on, they need to be trained and supported by information professionals and not left to founder in the morass of the Internet, but we can't do that on 1996 funding levels. My message to you is simple: The effects of the cuts are real. The danger today is the cuts are becoming institutionalized and permanent. Every year we wait to see restoration of funds means another year when the cuts become the new normal and resources we need to succeed in our technology-based world are permanently lost.

We in the New York 3Rs have been doing things right all along. We collaborate locally, regionally and Statewide to save money and improve service. We are models for the efficiencies of shared service being encouraged throughout government and our reward for that has been a 20 percent decrease in funding. We do appreciate this Committee's work. We recognize what you've all
done. We understand we have good friends on this Committee and we appreciate their support and the hard work on behalf of libraries. The New York 3Rs Association encourages you to recommend and work for restoration of State aid to libraries to its 2008 amount, the figure you've been hearing the $102 million. We understand this is a large percentage increase, but it's also a very modest dollar increase.

To your issue of what are some other things that would be of use to us: Very high on our list of priorities would be procurement reform. The New York State procurement laws are just so difficult to work with. The SUNYs can't purchase with us because they've got that set of laws and we can't bring the privates in for there's another set of reasons for that. If we could work on being able to centralize a lot of this purchasing, for example, the way the State Library has proposed, we would be saving a lot of money Statewide, but our laws are really not permitting us to do that.

And to one other issue you mentioned, the issues of Sandy. I would remind you that it's not just the public libraries that have been affected. As an example, a member of the Metropolitan New York Library Resources Council, the New York University Medical Center, their entire library was destroyed, it's gone. There are no physical materials left. The librarians are scrambling to provide research services and reference services and they're now planning to see what the library will look like in the new reality that they'll be living with.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you.
Just a couple quick comments. Certainly, I think what we have to do is follow up on this procurement reform, which is obviously important. I think I'm one that has great praise for the Governor, but I think with regulatory reform we haven't done that as quickly as some of the other good things that have been done. And that is pretty simple, but sometimes it's legislative and sometimes it's regulatory and regulatory is a lot easier and the Governor has to stand up and make those changes from the various oversight agencies and I think your role, along with the other Associations, would be to identify, you know, your priority reforms that you'd like to see.

MS. O'CONNOR: I think we have a number of those identified.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Going on, I would say, you know, again, you're very well-organized and you have the same message of $102 million as a number of other people, so it's good to see that you're connected with those people.

I would comment on the centralized purchasing, which has come up a number of times, and what has happened in the past or rather last year, there was great discussion and the Library wanted to take over purchasing for the entire State.

MS. O'CONNOR: For some databases.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: And there was a lot of discussion that went on in that. Well, first of all, some opinion was that that's not the purpose of the Library to be into State purchasing of, really, databases but other computer software, whatever the
terminology might be. And if after an examination, I mean, it's OGS that does that for all the other State agencies at the present time and OGS, we thought - many of us - was not going to give up that role and also, it was, I think, minimized a bit by the Library - Bernie is here, I have his attention - minimized the extent of, you know, the purchases. I mean, we're talking about billions of dollars and was the Library really prepared? I mean, they do novel and they have some experience on that but on a limited basis. And so, it's the magnitude of that job which I think was a concern. But that did come under consideration and agreement was reached not to pursue it last year, that doesn't put it off the table, or to take slices of that, all right, but I would think it's more practical to focus, which I think is important, on this procurement reform and allow the systems and the various libraries to do it.

Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Tim Burke, Executive Committee Representative of the New York State Alliance of Library Systems.

MR. TIMOTHY BURKE: Thanks very much. My name is Tim Burke. I'm the Executive Director of the Upper Hudson Library System. As one of New York's public library systems, UHLS supports and strengthens the services of the 29 public libraries right here in the Albany and Rensselaer Counties.

One of the disadvantages of going late in the list is much of your material is already taken by some of these much more eloquent speakers than I, but I am going to hit some of the points. I
apologize if they seem repetitious, but I think they're important enough that we need to hear them over and over again. The advantage to you is my testimony will be brief, so...

Today I'm speaking to you on behalf of the New York Alliance of Library Systems, the organization that brings together the State's 73 locally-based library systems. As we've heard there are three types of library systems serving over 19 million New Yorkers: Public library systems that support over 1,000 public libraries and branch libraries; school library systems that support over 4,500 school library media centers in elementary, middle and high school libraries Statewide, serving 2.8 million pupils, teachers and administrators; and multi-type reference and research library resource councils that support over 900 academic research, hospital, cultural and corporate libraries.

These library systems work together to create a network that connects the more than 7,000 libraries in New York State and as we've heard, library systems were first created in the late '40s to help libraries achieve economies of scale, resource sharing, collaborative projects and shared services. All of those themes are themes that we've heard talked about a lot lately from the current administration and in all conversations about local government efficiency, but it's important to note and reiterate that library systems have been doing these things for more than 50 years.

But library systems have been flexible and adaptable. As technology and the information environment has changed, library
systems have evolved to keep pace with our user needs. Today's
library systems provide their member libraries with innovative IT
solutions and services; Statewide delivery of research materials, both
physical delivery and electronic delivery; digitization of unique local
resources making them accessible to all New Yorkers; sophisticated
training and professional development opportunities for member
library staffs; shared purchasing of e-books and other digital
resources; collaborative collection development strategies to
maximize resource availability to all New Yorkers. In short, library
systems provide a cost-effective Statewide information infrastructure
that provides libraries with measurable economies of scale and shared
resources.

I have in my testimony a couple of statistics that have
all been said, again, so I won't repeat those, but the fundamental fact is
that library systems save taxpayers money and enable all libraries to
do more and we've been doing that for 50 years. It's also a
fundamental fact that library systems provide a structure for
cost-sharing and collaboration that should be and needs to be a model
for consideration by other government services interested in
regionalism and economies of scale.

But I realize that the specific topic of today's hearing
is the impact of the State budget on library services. Library systems
are funded primarily through State aid to libraries which has been cut,
as we've heard, 20 percent since 2008. These cuts have taken us back
to 1996 funding levels and just to put that in perspective I put my
librarian hat on this morning, did a little research. Gas prices - it was a $1.63 for a gallon of gas in 1996, that's the funding level that we're being asked to provide 21st Century library services with. We can assure you that these cuts are steadily eroding the foundation of New York's information infrastructure, making it difficult to maintain essential services, programs and staff and there is a real danger that this erosion will become permanent as library systems exhaust their modest fund balances, reduce their staff and discontinue valuable programs.

The New York Alliance of Library Systems has just one legislative priority - the restoration of State aid to libraries to its 2008 amount, $102 million. We acknowledge that this is a large percentage increase, but we also remind you that the $20.4 million required for full restoration represents less than two one-hundredths of 1 percent of the total State budget for 2012. So restoring library aid is -- this is your opportunity to make an investment in the future of New York State through your support of libraries and library systems.

And, Bob, I have a candidate for the 30-second message: Libraries connect people with the information they need. Funding libraries and library systems is an investment in New York's economic recovery, an investment in New York's future as a leader in the high-tech information economy, an investment in the current and future generations of New York's children and an investment that will produce a substantial return and make a lasting positive difference for the people of New York State. The New York Alliance of Library
Systems appreciates the Committee's support and your diligent efforts on behalf of libraries and we encourage the Committee to act as a group and as individual members to recommend and to fight for the restoration of State aid to libraries in the upcoming State budget.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I'm going to break one more rule and personally thank Bob for the work he's done on behalf of libraries. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Since you broke that rule, Tim, I'm going to chastise you.

MR. BURKE: I know. I consider myself formally chastised.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: No, no, no. It's on some other subjects so when we say -- it's my plea again here. When we say today we're talking about the impact of the State budget on library services, the impact of the State budget on library services. And some minds go immediately to, *We don't have this and, therefore, these services are going to be cut*. My mind goes to the impact of the State budget is those things that you described in your 30 second, *Here are all the great services we can have and how this can help our State*. That's only my plea. It's a different perspective half full, you know, half empty or whatever.

MR. BURKE: Right, right.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: But thank you and thank you for, you know, all your good work and, again, I think you have all come together. You've been talking with all your colleagues,
obviously, throughout the State. You have that single message. I would say, although I don't like the word "cuts" and "fair" and all that, I do like the word "restoration." I think that's a good word, that we want to restore our funding so we can provide these services and I think it's so important that you do have that specific number and hopefully the Assembly can, you know, be supportive of that. Thank you.

MR. BURKE: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Up next is John Eberhardt from the Library Trustees Association.

MR. JOHN EBERHARDT: Good afternoon, gentlemen.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Good afternoon.

MR. EBERHARDT: Honorable members of this Committee, my name is John Eberhardt. I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Library Trustees Association of New York State and I am a trustee at the South Huntington Public Library on Long Island. Today I'm representing thousands of library and library system trustees in the State. The mission of our organization is to educate, represent and advocate for trustees Statewide because they are the stewards of over $1 billion per year in local, State and Federal public funding, $1.3 billion in private and public annual income and $3.3 billion in library collections, equipment and real estate. We are volunteers who have undertaken an enormous fiduciary responsibility.

The education and training of trustees to fulfill this
important decision-making role is vital. These are teaching programs that are offered to trustees by libraries and library systems. This is another essential library service that is provided. The Library Trustees Association has a certification program in place that acknowledges trustees who have demonstrated the effort to educate themselves about libraries, library issues and the responsibilities associated with the position of library trustee. The Library Trustees Association cannot emphasize enough the importance of library funding and the impact libraries have on communities in New York State.

Thank you for holding this hearing and giving us the opportunity to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you, John.

I would just like to comment that we are very thankful for all the volunteer trustees throughout our State, thousands of them that work with little recognition, no compensation and an occasional, Tom there has left but a pat on the head. So, a pat on the head to them and I'm very thankful to each and every one of them.

MR. EBERHARDT: Well, thank you but for the most part we enjoy doing it. It's kind of like giving back.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: I'd just like to echo the same comments as the Chairman. Thank you for your service and to your counterparts.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Although your testimony was brief and our questions basically even more brief, the importance of your representation cannot be overlooked, that we need
the entire education, the entire library community here voicing the same message. So, thank you very much.

MR. EBERHARDT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: And now we have come to Clifton Park and so we have representatives from the Saratoga County, I'll call it, area and the Clifton -- let us say the Southern Adirondack Library System. So, I'll let you each introduce yourself as you speak.

MS. SARA DALLAS: Thank you. First of all, thank you very much and I commend you on your listening skills. You haven't even stretched. I could learn from you all. My name is Sara Dallas. I'm the Director of the Southern Adirondack Library System. I work with 34 member libraries, cooperative member libraries in Hamilton, Washington, Warren and Saratoga Counties. The population these libraries serve range from 134 people to about 55,000. The system helps provide equitable library service among all of the people, regardless of where they live in our service area.

Due to budget cuts down the line, we had to streamline our services to provide the most important services to our members, regardless of where they were located because all of those libraries are the heart and soul of their communities. They are the gathering spot and in some communities they are the only building open to the public.

The Southern Adirondack Library System provides four central services. The first is we are the computer network
wireless backbone that runs the card catalog, the computers, the reserving of materials, just the things that are necessary to a day-to-day running of the library. The second thing we do is we provide daily delivery among all of our members so that those resources could be borrowed and received to the end user, the person living in the community. The third thing we do is continuing education and consulting so that regardless if the library has only volunteers or one person or a large staff, we provide the expertise and the continuing education for all of those member library staff volunteers and trustees so that everyone has a level of quality library service. And the fourth thing we do is we work with the libraries so that they can provide the services to their public and have the technology and the knowledge that they need.

And having said that, I wanted to share with you also just quickly rather than read it to you is a very colorful chart. In the last construction round we had almost $2.3 million worth of construction projects, all good ones, and we only had maybe $400,000 through the State construction to be able to distribute so those libraries could do what they need to provide the services to their public. Having said that, I'll pass it on to my colleagues.

MS. KATHY NAFTALY: Hi. I'm Kathy Naftaly. I'm Acting Director of the Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, New York and I'm also President of the Public Library Section of the New York State Library Association. I will follow Sara's comments with we are the central library for the Southern Adirondack Library System
and as such, a portion of State funds goes through us both for collection development in our non-fiction and electronic resources and to supplement our monies for staffing, et cetera, so that we can help the smaller libraries in our district with needs that sales does not meet directly. We're more the frontline.

I'll read a few of my comments that you also have in your handout and then I have a few comments on what you've asked us to think about this morning.

As Central library, we're positioned as the bridge between the system and the other libraries. We speak many languages that have technology logistics ranging to customer service. Crandall Library is the community's incubator for lifelong education, quality of life and economic development. You talk about restoration. We restore lives. People come to us in a variety of situations and we can give them access to or directions to the tools they need to change their lives.

There was a tragic situation in our community the last week or so. A young child was killed by his mother's boyfriend and the obituary said that one of his highlights of his life was coming to the local library, which happened to be us, but I think had that child lived in any other community that would've been named as their library. So, that's what the bottom line is about all these numbers and all this that we're asking of you to ask of others - it's about people. Technology, it's great, but it's a tool. The end result is enriching people's lives.
A segue to the money part, however, for the past three years the Southern Adirondack Library System, its libraries and its patrons have had access to job skills and job readiness training through our public computer center funded through the New York State Library as a conduit for the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program. One Central library customer stated that after going through this class, *The resources and events provide me with inspiration and insights to help guide my professional and personal goals.* We have an existing partnership with the One Stop New York and as a result of this grant, and we've already negotiated with them to continue a relationship once the grant moneys have ended. It's moving forward -- One Stop, several miles from our main building, so there's a lot of, actually, physical interaction between the two facilities. We can share some resources, share knowledge; it's a very beneficial relationship for the both of us and especially for our community.

And the Glens Falls Economic Development Council, they actually thought of us in a tangential way. No, they didn't think to talk to us or our board about being on the council, but they recognized the library as a neutral space in the community and they've insisted that all their meetings take place at the library because we're at no one's territory, per se. So, it's a step in the right direction and they've certainly included me and our previous director in some of the local focus groups. I would also argue that libraries are an economic development agent because a good library will draw people who are
looking to live in a community. So housing, that helps.

And the last thing I'd like to say to you is I'm not going to give you my 30-second speech, but perhaps your 30-second speech to your colleagues could be you've heard of 24/7, how about 102/20. Thank you.

MS. ALEX GUTELIUS: I'm just going to follow up on Kathy's remarks with a few comments about how people are using the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library. And she talked about economic development. We know that in our community real estate agents tout our library as an advantage for living in our community and I don't think anyone would disagree with that. It's a beautiful building, an extremely well-used building and is, you know, I think a great example of what a community can do and build a public library.

I also wanted to just address very briefly in a tangential way compared to some of what the libraries, obviously, have experienced with respect to Hurricane Sandy, but I had one of our story time programmers speak to me the week after the hurricane that she had had a number of children come to her programs. Now, our preschool programs are extremely popular and pre-registration is required, but she had people who were coming that were refugees from Hurricane Sandy, either staying in local hotels or with relatives in the community and they wanted to bring their children to story time programs to -- first, because that's what they do in their own community, but also to establish some sense of normalcy for their children and we were able to provide that opportunity for them. We
are also, again, because we are as we've talked about a community center for the community, a collection point for toys and goods that are being collected as part of what they're calling "Superstorm Santa" in our community and the library and the town halls and the schools are where these items are being collected. But going back to some of my prepared remarks.

Our library opened in 2006. In that year we loaned about 475,000 items and our projection for 2012 is that we will loan over 900,000 items, an increase of nearly 90 percent in six years and I think that is certainly evidence that there is no lack of book borrowing, that does include some digital materials, but primarily print and audio/visual materials. During that same time period, the library has doubled the number of programs that we offered each year and our attendance at those programs has increased from about 9,000 in 2006 to nearly 24,000 people in 2012. We welcome between 1,000 and 1,500 people through our doors every single day and that's in a community, we serve a community about 50,000 people.

But libraries are more than just the number of items we have loaned or the people that we have provided programs to. We are about providing value and essential service to the people of our community. One of the examples of that for our library in the last year was providing a senior expo. Our staff, we have - as all communities do - a growing senior population. We had seen various commercial expos of senior services that were going on in various malls. Our staff had attended to see what information was there and
found that the cost of participating started at $500 and they felt that this was a great service that the library could provide so they arranged a day-long expo of senior services for not-for-profit organizations who came to the library and provided information to seniors there as well as programs. And that was attended by over 250 people and I think that's just a small example of the things that we are doing, working with organizations in our community and things that are relevant to the community that we serve.

We've also held volunteer fairs for adults and teens linking volunteers -- or organizations that need volunteers with teens and adults in the community who are looking for opportunities to volunteer. One of the things that's actually developed in this last year at our library is we've had a Junior Friends of the Library group start. This is something that there was a group of kids who wanted to participate in the Friends of the Library, which they certainly can do but felt that there was a need for something specifically aimed at teens and middle school children and it's been -- just started in the last couple of months. They're an incredibly dynamic group. They're participating. They have all kinds of ideas of ways that the library can improve services to teens. I was at a meeting on Tuesday night with them and one of their comments was, Well, maybe we could get the school transportation to make the library a stop on the late bus so that kids don't have to walk from the school to the library, and I thought that was a great idea. So we're looking at those types of things.

Our library actively participates in community events.
We have, I think for four years in a row, had a library book cart drill team in the local 4th of July parade which is extremely well-received. We participate in festivals and school events. We are integral part of our community and members of the community have come to expect the library at these events, not just see it as an exception.

People here today have talked about job search assistance and we are providing job search and assistance in a way that meets the needs of our community. We have a weekly Monday morning job club that's led by a local career professional because although our librarians are certainly assisting people who need help in submitting online applications or preparing a resume, the professionals in our community, unemployed professionals needed a place to meet and come together to network and this serves their needs and it's been very well-received. We work closely with local literacy agencies. There's three ESOL classes every week at our library and, in fact, when our library was built we dedicated a study room specifically for literacy and ESOL tutoring, recognizing the need that these people have to have a place to meet and do the tutoring and the training.

And these are just a few of the examples of what our library is doing in the community every day and now I'm going to turn it over to Dave Golden to talk about the economic impacts.

MR. DAVID GOLDEN: Good morning. The library has had a tremendous influence in the community economically. We see it in the patrons who come in the door. We get to know people
who come in from the new tech factory in Malta and we see families moving in to our community. Well, it's not just a matter of offering a paycheck. It's a matter of making that person feel at home, linked and rooted in our community and linked to their own, their original community. We're beginning to cater to that. We find that demand coming in. It means that that facility is able to attract and retain talented people who make thousands of jobs for many others in our community and while numerically they are a small part, they're a significant economic impact for us.

We are the center of the community and the community hub. We are a particular library that has two towns. They have not always seen eye to eye on services and particularly in library services and when we were first formed, it failed to get both towns on board. Later we managed to bring in the second and to build the present facility and for many, there is still a sense to posturing towards us and them, but for our patrons it is one place, it is our library, it is everybody's library. And we see people now who -- increasingly people who need support to secure jobs, to retain jobs, to reach out and access to the Internet that we provide. We have people in the parking lot before we're open using the open network in efforts to retain and pursue their jobs.

The computer skills that you get - I am an AARP member and we have a lot of members for whom the computers are kind of a scary thing, but the library has made it a doable thing, a friendly thing, a welcoming thing where they can come in and
establish - even if they don't own a computer, they can establish an account, they can stay in touch with grandchildren and children in more distance places. It's a small thing, but an important one.

The inner library loan facility, I can't begin to say enough about. When I was a student at Oneonta, I had a project once where I had to have James fighting ships for basically 1910 to 1920 and Oneonta is not a maritime city and when I handed that in and I can still the face, the horrified face of the librarian who told me, with great trepidation, that it was very nice but they probably couldn't get these until long after the course was over, but they would try. I had them the next week. I had them from almost as far as Buffalo and I had basically the inventory of the State in that particular thing. That not only made that paper happen, but it changed my way of looking at materials and teaching it in history and I spent 38 years teaching in the public schools here, it was shaped in no small measure but in that experience of getting that kind of material, that kind of way-out-of-the-norm stuff available. And I found that as I was a teacher, that the fact that the library in my community provided access to those kind of things, I could turn students on to learning that I couldn't have done otherwise. And once I heard people grumbling that our school librarians or public librarians weren't buying books when they asked for them and that wasn't my experience and I finally got my courage up and asked one of the librarians and she looked at me and said, *But when you ask for a book it gets used*, and that's it. The kids using the books is what counts.
We get a lot of students come in. They come in in the summer. We have a cooperative program with our school district where we plan in terms of what the curriculum and assignments for the following fall are. The students are made aware of that. We share books and materials. It's an integrated planning. It's cost effective for everyone and it allows us also to reach out to our partner libraries and get additional materials and make those kids better prepared for their educational experience. It's one of the things we do in our long-range planning was to develop that sort of thing.

I don't want to go on too much with some of these things, but as a trustee who has got to go out and face the voters every few years, you've got to be mindful of cost and this is the way to manage that, too. I believe that having to go to the voters directly and vote on a library budget directly is a very positive step and I would wish more libraries and all libraries were subject to that. But secondly, the fact that our community can adjust and share resources and the facility is there. It's not just a matter of those books that were mentioned, the 45 or 1,000 or so, that's maybe a half-million dollars in purchase, but buying them doesn't get them to you. You still got to ship them back and forth and if you're doing even those one-size-fits-all boxes at the post office you're looking at another half-million to $1 million in cost that my own library would face, never mind all the rest of them, were it not for the services that are provided.

Now, my average taxpayer doesn't know much about
what SALS is, but those of us who are on the delivery end of this do know and those services are vital and they save the taxpayers tons of money and the aid has not kept up. You've made some efforts in recent years and I would urge you to extend yourself and also to look to making the long-range commitment, maybe a five-year plan and every year as we complete that one portion we add on another year on the end so that there is certainty in the community, the library community about what is coming down the line, what they can reasonably expect and depend upon and can plan for.

We have a long-range planning committee that works far beyond the immediacy of our day-to-day budget processes and management processes and they continually make us aware of new things. We need to be able to have some assurance that we can do something that's going to be supportive in the long run out there to enhance the community's services and skills. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Since I represent the same area that you serve, Clifton Park-Halfmoon, you know, I've had an interest in your library and I'm often or always impressed by it. Of course, I always compare it to a railroad station where people are coming in out and busy, not frantic, but a busy pace and it's really being used. But what I question, but I think you gave me the answer - you're an integral part of the community and that is important for what we discussed today because the general public has no idea, I assure you, of public library systems and when I joined the Library Committee, like every month Lindsay back here would tell me of a
new type of library system or a new type of library. Oh, yes, the school library systems. Well, what are they? I think someone today said, you know, there's 74 or 75 library systems. Well, I always thought there were 24 or something, you know, and there's all these different -- for the lay public, who knows nothing about it anyway, but even if you were to study it, all of the complexity of the library systems.

So what we get down to for the general public in gaining support is a pebble in our own shoe or our own public library and that's what people know and it would seem that the answer to my question and my question being how come some of our local libraries have had their bond resolutions defeated and, you know, some of our neighboring communities, some bonding went up for a vote to expand their libraries and it was defeated. Meanwhile, we have a very modern, efficient, really beautiful and wonderful library in Clifton Park that has very strong community support. But would you say that the answer to that, because it answers really our whole advocacy program, is your connection to the community?

MS. GUTELIUS: I think so and I think you know that the first vote for our building was unsuccessful and they went back and I think looking at -- I wasn't there at the time and Dave was and maybe he can address it, but looking at where they weren't connected to the community, you know, where was the communication gap that led to this defeat and then they went back, they addressed those issues and did a lot more grassroots in the
community discussions. Brought the vote back the next year and it was successful and, obviously, Dave was there at the time so...

MR. GOLDEN: Sure was. I had just come on board there. We did lose that vote by I think it was like 200 votes in the initial run of that and we had people who couldn't get physically into the building to vote, all kinds of issues. What we did in the year that intervened there was a lot of learning about what the community wanted and forming our message to show them how this was going to affect and benefit them. We also did a much more complete job of explaining things. We thought we had good reasons for different choices, but because we had them didn't mean the community understood them or even knew them and we did a lot more outreach. And I happened to end up being a spokesman for the board so we had a focused message going out and we changed the polling place the next year. We went to the local mall and said can we hold our election there and they gulped a number of times and finally said yes and we moved to the interior courtyard. That election -- normally we get 3- or 400 people, 500 people if we're lucky. We had 7,800 people show up and we carried it and we carried it by a comfortable margin but not a fantastic one.

But the difference was in the communications. It was folks seeing the message and making people aware of what was there and giving them, frankly, a place they could vote. They could all get into the mall. The year before the old library was so small they really couldn't, but it was in the message, it was in the difference in showing
the community the benefits of this and how it was going to help them with meeting their goals and their aspirations.

MS. GUTELIUS: And I think, too, though, just to follow up on that, when I was brought on board in 2008 and I'm sure certainly prior to that, one of the board's stated goals is outreach in the community.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Was what?

MS. GUTELIUS: Outreach in the community. That is one of the goals that we focus on and have focused on for the last number of years and will continue to focus on because it is essential that, as I said before, it's not that it's a surprise that we're out in the community, but an expectation.

MR. GOLDEN: It may seem almost frivolous to talk about a drill team with book carts, but, in fact, a substantial building in an institution is a foreboding place to some and I would say that, frankly, the farther down the educational scale you go the more likely it is to be scary and institutional and that humanizes -- everybody likes to go to a parade, the parents take the kids to the parade and here's this funny drill team and, you know, they're not so scary, it's not so bad and maybe I can take my kid to the library. Maybe I will drive them over at night do some work and there's benefits to that and it has helped us to reach out a little unconventionally but to different parts of the community and break down that resistance to there and to find out we can help and it is a segment of the community that needs our help more than many others, it's a door opener.
ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you. Sara, just out of curiosity, did you say that one of your libraries within the system served 130-some people?

MS. DALLAS: Yes. Racquet Lake.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Racquet Lake. That's the place where there's three kids in the school district? I wasn't sure of that, but it's that type of story or anecdotal information that is important for people.

MS. DALLAS: And I'd like to just share one more thing about that little library. There are more deliveries of library materials to that library than the bread and beer truck.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: You know, since I'm leaving office I think I can say there ain't that much to do in Racquet Lake so people use the library. Thank you very much.

Next is J'aime Pfeiffer, School Library System Director, Capital Region BOCES.

MS. J'AIME PFEIFFER: Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Good afternoon.

MS. PFEIFFER: My name is J'aime Pfeiffer. I'm the School Library System Director for Capital Region BOCES in Albany. First I want to thank you for holding this hearing to listen to our concerns and, quite frankly, for still being here, and also for increasing the State aid for school library systems and other library systems for the school year.

As you'll hear, this funding is extremely important for
us to support our school librarians in a number of ways. In going off script for just a minute, I thought that this was supposed to be about how we spend our money and collaborate so I apologize for not asking for more, but that's kind of a given so...

In order to give you a better picture of what school library systems do and how we prioritize our spending of funds, I think it's important for you to have an understanding of the people we support, school librarians. If you haven't been in a school or a school library in the past 10 to 15 years, you might not recognize what goes on in there. School librarians do so much more than read and recommend books and check them in and out. They are first and foremost teachers of information literacy. We are in an era where we have a foot in two worlds, print and technology, and it is important to teach our students how to access the information they need from both.

On any given day you will find school librarians teaching classes, collaborating with teachers on lessons, recommending books, websites and databases, balancing budgets to give their students the best resources for the least amount of money and, yes, checking books in and out and reshelving them before the next class comes in.

School librarians have the responsibility to serve all the students and staff in a school. This means that they must be familiar with all curricular areas, State and common core standards and what teachers are covering at any given time to help them find the right resources and to make sure the students have the information and literacy skills to meet those standards. They do all of these things.
with limited resources, shrinking staffs and all too often in more than one building. With the introduction of the common core State standards, school librarians have the opportunity to do what they do best, teach information skills in an environment of inquiry, guiding students to ask their own questions and develop curiosity while helping them find the resources that will answer those questions.

Unfortunately, all of this has come about at the same time the economy has taken a serious hit, especially in education. Because school librarians are not mandated in New York State for grades K through 6, many districts have made the decisions to downsize or eliminate those positions at a time when common core is demanding that those information skills be taught. Examples just here in the Capital District are districts that have one librarian covering both the secondary and elementary building. In reality, the librarian has to spend most of the time in one building, leaving the other building to be run by a clerk typist. We have a district with three elementary buildings, none of which have a certified librarian. We have a high school with over 2,300 students run by one librarian, three aids who serve primarily as crowd control and a clerk typist who is there for only three half days per week. Other districts have librarians going between two or three buildings every week.

Who then is working with teachers to select good resources for students when common core is demanding more reading from informational texts? How are materials selected for purchases for print and technology? Are outdated materials being left on the
shelves for students to find incorrect information to use in their research? If librarians themselves are not reduced, their library staff is or their support staff is, taking valuable time from their schedules to do administrative tasks rather than teaching, collaborating and collection development, all of which are the most valuable things they can do for students.

More than 20 states, including New York, have done extensive studies that show that having a quality school library with a certified librarian increases overall test scores for all students in all curricular areas. By reducing or eliminating those positions, we are putting our students at risk for not being able to meet the common core standards because many of those skills are taught by school librarians. As part of the recently adopted 2020 vision and plan for library services, one of the recommendations from the New York State Regents to the New York State Board of Regents is to expand the existing Commissioner's regulations to require an elementary school librarian in every school to strengthen instructional leadership in meeting the P12 common core learning standards and enforce library staff and regulations in all public schools.

As a representative of the school library system administrators, I would ask that you endorse and support this extension of the mandate that is already in place for secondary buildings.

In addition to staff reduction, school libraries receive materials aid at a rate of $6.25 per student. This figure hasn't changed
for over 25 years, whereas the cost of books now averages between $25, $30 each and databases can run between $50 and $1,500. Many of our school libraries are given only that money with which to purchase materials. For a school with 500 students, that amounts to just over $3,000 which could buy maybe 100 books in one year. One book for every five students does not build a quality library. While there are free Internet sites where students can get information, they cannot replace quality print and e-word resources, even assuming there’s a librarian in every school to teach them how to mind those resources. Fortunately, we have some databases that are free to all residents of New York through the novel databases because, again, for many of our schools those are the only e-resources that they can provide for our students.

So that leads us to the school library systems and what we do to help our school librarians both financially and professionally. While every system receives a different amount of money based on square miles and student populations, we have common goals to offer our librarians the best pricing we can find for print and e-resources and to give them low- or no-cost professional development training. In addition, school library system administrators have worked together across several projects and will continue to do even more collaborating in the future.

Perhaps the best example of this is the information fluency continuum which has been several years in the making and, in fact, meets the first recommendation for school libraries in the 2020
vision for libraries and attached is a summary of that document. Barbara Stripling, former New York School Library System Director and the School Library System Coordinators in New York City initially developed and shared a detailed inquiry-based curriculum of library and informational skills for 21st Century learners. She shared her work with others and as a result, Capital Region BOCES' school library system in conjunction with other regional BOCES provided training documentation for school librarians and teachers. As a result of Barbara Stripling's work and the documentation for school librarians, training for hundreds of librarians and teachers has been offered by school library systems in the last eight years. This led Questar III to provide an annual inquiry form that invited librarian teacher teams and their administrators from all regional BOCES to present on the success they had with students when using inquiry-based curriculum which, in turn, led to more training with very positive results in our region and throughout the State.

Barbara Stripling and her team continued their work by creating an information fluency continuum guide that included inquiry and information fluency skills, as well as benchmark assessments for those skills at each grade level. When the common core State standards were adopted, the New York City team went to work again, aligning each of those standards with the skills needed to meet those standards. The New York City School Library System has been extremely generous in sharing all of their work with the rest of the State. This information fluency continuum has recently been
revised and rebranded and is now the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum. School library councils across the State have adopted or are in the process of adopting this Empire State IFC as the standards for our school librarians. Much of this work has been funded by the State aid for our library systems and/or by LSTA grant funding. None of these things could have happened without cooperation, sharing and State funding.

School library systems have proven the power of consortium purchasing. In the past few years we’ve had a committee that has worked diligently on getting all database purchases from almost all BOCES into a centralized system that offers information and pricing from vendors. By working with someone who negotiates pricing for all of us, prices for a large number of popular databases used in our libraries has been significantly reduced. This has enabled many of our schools to either save hundreds of dollars or, in some cases, be able to purchase additional databases with money that has been saved, giving their students more resources over and above the novel databases. This 2012-2013 school year, school library systems have reported approximately $4.5 million in database purchases through this consortium and are working on adding more vendors for price reductions. In the Capital Region, all of our districts who purchase databases come through us because of the savings we can offer them through this consortium pricing. Purchasing of databases through BOCES has recently been opened up to other library systems. If they come into the consortium as well, pricing can be reduced even
Other examples of using State aid and grants are in the area of professional development for school librarians. Last summer, three BOCES school library systems combined to provide a comprehensive three-day training on the new student learning objectives for school librarians. Held here in the Capital Region, school librarians and SLS directors from across the State came for training. At the end of the three days and continuing still is the collection of SLOs on the School Library System Association website for all librarians to share and use as needed. We are currently in the process of going through all of the SLOs to find exemplary samples for our own website and to share on EngageNY.

This is the second year that school library systems are offering an online cool tools for schools professional development training that includes lessons and sharing out of technology tools such as blogs and wikis, online communities and social media, photosharing and other skills that can be used to teach students and teachers to become savvy users of 21st Century technology. Through this program, eight school library systems have provided professional training for over 200 librarians and teachers at no cost to them in a way that they can learn on their own time and at their own pace.

As for more specific spending in individual school library systems, I can only speak for Capital Region, though I know similar things are being done across the State. We use State aid to purchase databases so that all of our schools have access at no cost.
We currently offer teachingbooks.net, a collection of essays, audio and video presentation on books and authors and noodle tools, an online bibliography and note-taking database that helps students organize all of their notes for research. Most recently, we're offering Overdrive, a virtual library where students and teachers can check out e-books and audio books and download them onto almost any platform -- computers, e-readers, iPads, smart phones. In addition to our offering all of these products, we provide training at our site or in districts and purchase marketing materials so librarians can share how to get access to all of these programs with their students and staff.

For the last three summers, we have sent any librarian who has applied to the School Librarian Leadership Conference sponsored by the New York Library Association's Section of School Librarians and held at Cornell University. These librarians have been immersed in training on topics such as teacher evaluations, student learning objectives and, most recently, common core State standards and the information fluency continuum. We do a number of other things as well, but these are just a few of the examples.

I have spent most of my adult life in public service, first serving in the United States Navy, then in public education as a teacher, a school librarian and now as a school library system director and I have to say in all honesty that the proudest moment in those 25 years was when a Holocaust survivor came to Queensbury High School where I was a librarian and she spoke to a group of students about her experience immigrating to America. She said she was in the
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grocery store buying those little Golden books for her children when a friend approached her and told her about this place she could go and by signing up for a card, she could take out all the books she wanted for free. *For free*, she asked in amazement, and then she went there and got her card and checked out books that otherwise would have cost her precious pennies and the only thing she could say was, *America, what a country.* Our democracy thrives because of educated citizens and because we have these wonderful buildings we call libraries where people can go and learn about anything they want. I believe it's a small price to pay for giving everyone, our students included and maybe, especially, such a tremendous opportunity. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you. It seems that you don't have a problem, as some other speakers said they do, with procurement, cooperative procurement and purchasing of databases cooperatively, because some people spoke earlier of procurement reforms and regulations that prevent cooperative buying and buying for others.

MS. PFEIFFER: Well, we've done it through school library systems only, although it was opened up, I believe, for this school year if there were public libraries who wanted to come through local BOCES for databases, as well. I think that that was just recently opened up, although I don't know of anybody that's taken advantage of that yet. This was something that we pretty much did on our own which was to say what vendors are we purchasing from, what pricing
are we paying because what we discovered is that one BOCES would pay a completely different price than another BOCES and we said that we wanted to be able to get this on a level playing field so by putting everything into a database where we knew what we were spending and asking somebody to actually work with the vendors for us we got pricing that was greatly reduced across the State because it's consortium pricing. I'm only paying -- purchasing for Capital Region BOCES, but I'm paying the same price as Questar or WishWe or whatever other kinds of BOCES because they know that we're all purchasing the same products.

ASSEMBLYMAN PALMESANO: Just to kind of go on that same topic because that's the point in your testimony that really caught my attention, like the Chairman said, about the purchasing and the co-ops and I think that's something we need to pursue more because it seems like that's something that can be helpful and I don't know if it's working with the Alliance of the Library Systems with Mr. Burke to try to help bring more of that together and along with the State because, obviously, there's savings to be made there and with limited dollars any time we can find savings and that type of cooperative purchasing could be a helpful thing.

So, I was really intrigued to hear that that's working well for you and where some of the other areas thought that that could be something that could be helpful on a Statewide basis.

MS. PFEIFFER: Well, you're right. It is working well for us but, again, you know, the legislation has only opened it up
starting this school year in terms of some other kind of library system being able to use our -- to go through ours to leverage some of the pricing for them. So to be honest with you, I'm not sure about all the procurement regulations, but I do know that, you know, we do seem to have all of these pockets around the State but we're all purchasing the same kinds of things. So, you know, it's helped us by going through and working together cooperatively and telling the vendors we know what you're charging somebody else and, you know, we shouldn't be charged more than they are, so...

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you very much.

MS. PFEIFFER: Thanks for staying so late.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Jennifer Ogrodowski from the Saratoga Springs Public Library.

MS. JENNIFER OGRODOWSKI: Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Good afternoon.

MS. OGRODOWSKI: My name is Jennifer Ogrodowski. I work at the Saratoga Springs Public Library as the Youth Services Department head. I'm also the current President of the YSS, Youth Services Section, of NYLA, New York Library Association, and thank you.

In the notice of this hearing it was stated that libraries continue to represent a community investment. I want to thank the Committee for their recognition of public libraries and library systems as investment in communities. It is vitally important that this view continue for when we educate individuals, communities become
stronger. The value of this public good extends beyond the walls of
the library and ripples on beyond those who immediately benefit from
its resources to those who are impacted by an individual's motivation
to acquire further knowledge and understanding. I have long believed
in the power of the public library to serve and educate all.

A society is only as strong and wise as those
individuals which build it. The beauty and strength of a public library
is accessibility. The goods and services provided by these institutions
can change lives and encourage communities to stay vital and strong.
Libraries are not merely warehouses of books, but some may have this
antiquated view. They are living institutions where community
members and visitors come to learn, to grow and to connect. In our
role we not only assist people in finding materials, guide them in the
use of new technologies, help children find answers to homework
questions, offer early literacy and activities for the very young and
provide parent education programs, we also serve as community
facilitators, bringing together groups of individuals with different
ideas and resources in a meaningful way that helps our patrons to find
new connections.

As I am here today representing youth services, I will
speak in general terms regarding a sample of types of programs that
public libraries across the State are providing to their communities. A
sample list of programs provided are library babies, after-school
workshops, preschool story programs, story music programs, story and
art programs, therapy dogs, parenting workshops, technology classes
for children and teens and more. The impact and value of such programs can be seen in statistics in early literacy development, as well as their connection to current initiatives and education. Many of the programs that we provide to young people are geared at supporting their growth and development and supplementing the education that they receive in school and through the home. We continue to learn just how important it is to support early literacy education and experiences from the very beginning. Children who cannot yet read are still developing the foundational skills necessary to be able to read when they are ready.

We know that the interaction between a child and a trusted adult, whether it be a parent, a grandparent, a teacher or a caregiver is essential to helping children make gains in language development. The ability to make sense of and use language is the start of a lifetime of learning. For many children the library is a place where -- excuse me. For many children, the library is a place where this learning is reenforced. As children hear more language and participate in its creation, they grow stronger in their ability to understand concepts. Adults who participate in family literacy activities with their children learn how to continue to encourage their children in this reinforced learning.

In addition to literacy programs for the very young, libraries also provide opportunities for school-aged children to explore literature, science, art, dance and more. Through these after-school programs, children learn to be inquisitive, learn new skills and have a
chance to further engage in activities that support such initiatives as STEM and the common core. As much as possible, public libraries strive to work with local schools and homeschool families and groups who offer opportunities for such growth and reinforcement.

A sample list of additional services public libraries provide to children, teens and families include user education, technology, research, readers advisory, reference, class and school visits, community organizations, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, et cetera, tutors, programs and instruction. Libraries provide not only programs and access to materials but also knowledgeable staff to assist patrons in learning new skills and finding information. Part of the service that libraries offer is the assistance needed to connect the user with the information or experience that the user is seeking. While technology has made it possible to access the world at our fingertips, that amount of access also comes with the sometimes daunting task of actually finding what one is looking for amidst it all. The user education services that public libraries provide through one-on-one consultations, through workshops and through group visits help library users to navigate through physical and online environments to reach the information they seek.

Since our library has started its service in a certain geographic area and we have limited staff, we are not able to accommodate the classroom community groups that are based outside of our service area. Recently a Cub Scout troop parent called asking if he could schedule a library tour and workshop on how to use the
library and find information so that the troop could earn their library badge. As much I would have liked to say yes to him, I could not because the troop is based out of a neighboring service area. I explained to him why we were not able to do the program and suggested that he contact his local library as I was sure the librarian there would be happy to help. Upon this suggestion, he said that he had called them, that they were not open on the day that he could bring the troop. This is where funding becomes critical so that libraries can operate during hours to meet their community's needs.

Library systems continue to provide consistent delivery services to member libraries, I'm sorry -- I'm switching to library systems. Library systems continue to provide consistent delivery to services to member libraries, helping to fill patron requests when individual library budgets do not allow them to do so. Because our systems do this, we are able to get children enough copies of a book that they are required to read when the school cannot. Because our systems do this, libraries with limited funding for materials and/or space are able to offer their community members the chance to also have access to materials that would otherwise be denied to them.

Library systems, if funding allows for it, have youth services consultants who know that continuing education and collaboration is an important part of keeping up with user expectations and needs. These consultants work to bring youth services staff together for training and collaborative meetings that allow youth services staff to continue to provide quality services to their
communities. They also work to promote and support the libraries and their systems through collaborative programs and grant-seeking activities. At this point, many library systems do not have a full-time youth services consultant to provide this type of support.

Some libraries in the State have used technology in the form of video webcast to provide their community members with author visits. For libraries who cannot afford to pay the cost of transportation and lodging for an author visit, this has been one way that libraries have been able to offer such opportunities to their communities using technology to better leverage the resources that they do have. In addition, many libraries are taking advantage of free or inexpensive social media outlets as a way to keep their public informed on library happenings and developments. Online learning environments are another way that libraries can provide opportunities and stretch their resources to their communities; however, this does require the technology and staff training to be able to do so.

Next, I'll move on to ascertaining the future funding needs of our public libraries and library systems. Technology needs. With new devices and platforms comes more ways of accessing information. While libraries still work with books, they must also keep up with an ever-increasing demand for information on how to use new technologies. This is part of the job that has been added to what library staff is expected to know and offer assistance with. While library staff members continue to order and weed and plant programs and answer reference questions and readers' advisory
questions, community members also look to library professionals to
tell them how to use their e-book or what apps are good for their
children.

I do not believe that the prevalence of hand-held personal technology is a trend that will soon be gone. Current technology means that people can access information any time, anywhere and yet with an overwhelming amount of information at their fingertips, patrons still look for guidance in sifting through this data. If anything, libraries need the tools and training to be able to help their community members navigate through it all. Technology is ever-changing and, yet, patrons ask that we keep up with it so we can help them. To do so, libraries need the continued financial resources to help stay one step ahead of the technology curve so that they can meet patron needs and expectations.

Intertwined with the technology needs is the ongoing need for staff training. Staff need the time and the resources to keep up with the new technologies. Funding is necessary to make this happen. For small libraries that are lucky if they have one librarian who is scheduled to work 25 hours a week but puts in more voluntary hours on top of that to keep the library going, it is often almost impossible for the library staff to attend training that would allow them to keep up with the demand for knowledge of devices and web-based learning tools.

On staff training and technology. It is also important that staff who work with children keep up with current trends and
early childhood development and educational philosophies and mandates. In order for public librarians to support the students, teachers and parents in their communities, they must have time to further develop their skills and understanding of working with children of all ages. Youth services librarians must have knowledge and understanding of infant, toddler, preschool, elementary school, tween, teen, young adult, adult and older adult populations. As youth services librarians, we often move between serving these individuals groups at one moment to serving several groups at once in family program settings. We must give validity to the work and knowledge that it takes to effectively meet the educational and experiential needs of all these groups by continuing to provide funding that will allow staff to remain up to date on how to best design programs and services geared towards these populations.

Most of the time libraries are not able to meet the demands the of the communities that they serve for better access to the libraries, more programs to support the growth and development of their children or computer literacy needs because they simply do not have the funding necessary to provide the staff necessary to meet these needs. Many libraries rely on volunteers to help them supplement some of the work the professional staff does, but this is often not enough. Volunteers are not staff and they cannot be expected to be held to the same level of dedication and continuing education that staff members can. To create programs and services and sustain these programs for as long as they are needed and useful,
staff is required. Without staff, libraries are merely warehouses and not cultural centers of community education.

If we truly value libraries as a community investment, we must be willing to fund that investment. We must see it as a priority that is worth funding. When libraries are denied funding or given less money than they were given over a decade ago, it sends a strong message to community members in towns and villages and across the State. It sends the message that they are not vital, they are not important, that they are not worth investing in, that community education for all is not worth investing in. I ask that our beautiful State continue to tell people who reside in it that it cares about their future and their children's future. I ask that it send a strong message that says public libraries, the centers of community education and exploration, are important. I ask that it do so by continuing to fund public libraries and library systems so that they can be centers of the community education that people can depend on. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you. It's good to hear from another person working directly with the constituents of the libraries.

A quick question, a little off the topic - the budget topic - but when the Girl Scout troop or Boy Scout troop was denied the tour, was that a library policy? It wasn't regulation, was it?

MS. OGRODOWSKI: I'm sorry, what was the last part?

ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: It was library policy
and not State regulation that determined that?

    MS. OGRODOWSKI: That's correct. It's just with
the limited staff that we have available. We are really only able to
serve the designated area that our taxes basically serve in that manner
for special programming.

    ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: Thank you very much.

    MS. OGRODOWSKI: Thank you.

    ASSEMBLYMAN REILLY: That concludes our
hearing for today. Thank you very much. We mentioned at the
beginning of this hearing a couple follow-up things that we would do,
including informing all of the members of the Assembly that this
hearing took place with a brief summary, a more comprehensive
summary sent to the Committee members and then when a new
Committee is formed, to those members and I may ask the Ranking
member to join me with the letter to the Governor that I said I would
send requesting that, or at least stating the importance of having
libraries and library systems included as an integral part of the
Economic Development Councils around the State. Thank you very
much.

    (Whereupon, the Assembly Standing Committee on
Libraries and Education Technology Hearing on Funding Public
Libraries was concluded.)