

January 26, 2009

The State Budget - Immediate Action Required

On January 7, 2009, Governor Paterson gave his first State of the State Address. Due to the current fiscal and economic crisis, the State faces a potential \$13.7 Billion dollar deficit for FY 2009-10. In order to help the budget process, the Governor released his proposed Executive Budget for FY 2009-10 a month early in December 2008.

Governor Paterson's proposal includes reduced spending across most areas of State spending and library funding is affected as follows:

\$80.5 Million in Library Aid — A REDUCTION OF 18% —bringing aid to 1993 levels

\$14 Million in Library Construction Aid — deletion of the \$800,000 Annual Program

As libraries tend to be used more during hard times, we must emphasize to our legislators the importance of not cutting library aid so drastically!

Advocacy efforts are already underway. Michael Borges, Executive Director of New York Library Association (NYLA), met with Westchester's own Amy Paulin (88th Assembly District) as Chair of the Library & Education Technology Committee. She has requested two things from the library community to help her get Assembly support for the restorations of Library Aid:

THIS WEEK: Call or write your State Assemblymembers (Democrats)—[click here for contact information](#)—and ask them to do two things:

1. **Sign on to the letter Ms. Paulin will be circulating to Assemblymembers to support the restoration of library aid that will be delivered to Speaker Silver. [[See letter sent by Westchester Library System.](#)]**
2. **The Assembly Democratic Conference will be discussing Education funding this week. It is at this meeting that Ms. Paulin will have the opportunity to speak up on behalf of library funding. She needs other legislators to join with her. Request your representatives to: "Join Amy Paulin in speaking up in conference in support of libraries."**

NEXT WEEK & BEYOND [The budget must be approved by 4/1/2009.]

- √ **Come with us on the bus to Lobby Day in Albany on Tuesday, March 10, 2009**
We are again participating with the Mid-Hudson Library System and Ramapo-Catskill Library System. [Click here for flyer with more information.](#)
- √ **Contact your State Representative via the NYLA's Online Advocacy Center at <http://capwiz.com/nyla/state/main/?state=NY>.**
Even though done online, these contacts are transferred via fax and are very effective.

ONGOING:

- √ **Write a letter, send an email, or call your State representatives and/or a member of the Senate Finance Committee or Assembly Ways & Means Committee.**

See enclosed contact information.

- √ **Make an appointment with your representative at their local offices.**

Let your legislators know why your library is so important to you. You can arrange a meeting with them in their local offices.

Please let the WLS offices know that you've contacted your representatives by informing Elise Burke [eburke@wlsmail.org; 914-231-3225] to ensure that everyone has been reached. Yes, we can make a difference by informing our legislators today of the importance of our libraries!

Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director

ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS

- ◆ The removal of the supplemental aid translates to a loss of approximately **\$455,660** for WLS and loss of **\$51,042** for distribution to our member libraries.

Also, the loss of **\$36,526** toward the Annual Public Library Construction Aid grants.

- ◆ Reduced funding may affect the level of support WLS provides to its members as the administrative backbone for the 38 libraries in Westchester County:
 - * Countywide technological infrastructure
 - * Countywide delivery service
 - * Professional development
 - * Catalog and website in multiple languages
 - * Programmatic support for children, teens, adults, and under-served populations (immigrants, disabled, seniors)
- ◆ School Aid is also being reduced by \$698 Million in this FY2009-10 budget; however, BOCES Aid is increased by \$33 Million.
- ◆ Library Aid has not kept pace with inflation. Between 1998-2006, library and library systems received no increases in funding from the state; and this year's cut would bring library funding down to a level not seen since 1993.
- ◆ In over 73% of communities, the library is the only source of free internet service according to a recent poll by the American Library Association. In WLS member libraries in 2007, there were approximately 12 users of public access terminals per hour open.
- ◆ Public Library Systems are a good investment: For every \$1 of State Aid that New York State's library systems receive, library users receive more than \$13 in service.