

New York State Assembly | Sheldon Silver, Speaker



committee on
Libraries and Education Technology

Amy R. Paulin, Chair

December 15, 2009

The Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 346
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Silver:

I am honored to present to you the Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology for the 2009 legislative session. It has been my privilege to serve as Chair of this Committee for the past three years.

The Assembly Majority and the Committee on Libraries and Education Technology are dedicated to working to maintain resources for the libraries of New York State. With the enactment of Chapter 917 of the laws of 1990, libraries were provided with a regular and steady funding formula, making it possible for them to expand the scope of services offered to the public.

I am proud to have played an active part in a budget process that helped restore over \$10.5 million in aid to libraries and library systems, including \$8 million in formula supplemental grants for library systems. In addition, \$14 million in funding was provided to continue statewide library capital projects. This restoration of aid displayed the Assembly Majority's strong commitment to libraries and library systems throughout the State. Unfortunately in November, the Legislature was called back by the Executive in order to address the state's growing budget deficit. As a result, aid to libraries and library systems was reduced by approximately \$4.2 million.

Our State's libraries offer a range of essential services to the public, including Internet access, literacy programs and research material, and employ staff with the skills to support these services. The Assembly Majority has made it a priority to secure increased funding necessary to help libraries maintain these services. I look forward to the upcoming session as we continue to work to ensure that our libraries get the support they need.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee, as well as all of the members of the Assembly Majority, for their commitment and dedication to the work of the Committee. I would also like to thank you for your unwavering support of this Committee on these important issues and for allowing me the privilege of serving as Chair of this Committee. Finally, I would like to extend my congratulations to Assemblymember Barbara Lifton, the new Chair of the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy R. Paulin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A".

Amy R. Paulin
Member of Assembly

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES
AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

Amy R. Paulin, Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Michael Benjamin
Barbara M. Clark
Susan V. John
David Koon
Grace Meng
Kenneth Zebrowski

Minority

Philip M. Boyle
Marcus J. Molinaro

Staff

Mark Casellini, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Lindsey Goodspeed, Legislative Analyst
Suzanne Bolling, Associate Counsel
Vanessa Kemp, Committee Clerk
Laura Inglis, Program and Counsel Executive Secretary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	COMMITTEE JURISDICTION	1
II.	PROVIDING LIBRARIES WITH NECESSARY RESOURCES.....	2
III.	IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES.....	4
IV.	PUBLIC HEARINGS.....	5
V.	COMMITTEE OUTLOOK FOR 2010	7
	APPENDIX A: 2009 SUMMARY OF ACTION ON COMMITTEE BILLS	8
	APPENDIX B: CHAPTERS OF 2009	9

I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The Libraries and Education Technology Committee was created in 1997 under the leadership of Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. The Committee has jurisdiction over legislation introduced concerning the many issues affecting public, academic, school and private libraries. The Committee develops and reviews legislation affecting the administration and funding of libraries and library systems across New York State. As today's explosion in information technology has placed new demands on libraries, we are mindful of our responsibility to ensure that New York's libraries will be able to meet the challenges of the information age. The work done by the Committee assists libraries to sustain the infrastructure and staff resources necessary to allow all New Yorkers access to technological advances available through New York's vast library community.

Libraries are integral to the educational and cultural development of all New Yorkers. Through a wealth of electronic and print media, New York's libraries provide individuals and communities with exposure to information that broadens their intellectual, social and cultural experiences. New York State has over 7,000 libraries that serve our citizens in many capacities. Many of these libraries are among the largest and the best in the country. Of the forty largest libraries in the United States, six are located in New York, more than in any other State. New York's largest library, the New York Public Library, contains over ten million volumes and is among the top research institutions in the world. Among New York's most cherished resources, our libraries provide support for all those in search of information, knowledge, enlightenment or inspiration, whether they are students, teachers, researchers, academicians, authors, readers, job seekers, entrepreneurs or consumers.

As libraries are called upon to play an expanding role in educating New Yorkers, it is imperative that our libraries receive the attention and support they require to answer the call as we move forward in the 21st century.

II. PROVIDING LIBRARIES WITH NECESSARY RESOURCES

The libraries of New York State work hard to meet the needs of the populations that they serve. However, those needs may vary widely, even within one district. Public, academic and school libraries cannot serve their patrons without an adequate and reliable source of funding. The New York State Assembly has long supported libraries and the educational, cultural and economic roles they play in their communities. The Assembly Majority is committed to providing libraries with resources to meet the needs of all of our state's citizens. Providing these resources requires a well-focused policy commitment as well as significant state financial support.

The Assembly has made increased funding for New York's libraries a priority. To meet the funding needs of New York libraries, Chapter 917 of 1990 was enacted, establishing a formula which was designed to provide stable funding for both library systems and individual libraries based on the most current census figures. Unfortunately, from 1998 until 2006, Governor Pataki left funding rates for libraries unadjusted, leaving New York's libraries and library systems severely underfunded. With each year that funding remained stagnant, libraries and library systems lost valuable buying power and the ability to expand and respond to the growing needs of their communities. However, in 2007 and 2008, the Assembly worked to ensure that an extraordinary amount of additional funding was made available to libraries and library systems across the State. Libraries and library systems were once again funded at current census levels by the inclusion of supplemental aid for libraries in the final budget.

In 2009, New York State faced incredibly difficult economic times. As a result, the Executive proposed an \$18 million reduction in funding for libraries and library systems. This reduction in funding would have seriously compromised the vital services that libraries and library systems provide. However, the Assembly worked to restore over \$10.5 million of the Executive's proposed cut, including a restoration of \$8 million in formula supplemental grants for library systems. In addition, the Assembly fought to ensure that the appropriations for libraries and library systems were reduced proportionately to assure that all programs would continue to receive funding. Finally, \$14 million in funding was provided to continue statewide library construction projects. These funds come at a critical time, with libraries and library systems cutting back on much-needed services and nearly half of the state's library buildings 50 or more years old.

The final budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10 provided \$91.081 million in aid for libraries and library systems. This is an approximate decrease of 7.53% from the Fiscal Year 2008-09 budget allocation of \$98.5 million. In November of 2009, the Legislature was called back by the Executive in order to address the state's growing budget deficit. As a result, aid for libraries and library systems was reduced to \$86.8 million.

Local library legislation

A.7185-A, Gunther; Chapter 377 of 2009 This law authorizes an increase in the number of members on the board of trustees of the Mamakating Library District to no less than five but no more than fifteen members.

A.7607, Canestrari; Chapter 321 of 2009 This law authorizes the Troy Public Library, a free association library, to re-charter as a special district library. As a result of this legislation, a public vote was held on the library's budget and trustees.

A.5865, McKeivitt This bill would require that, for the purposes of allocating tax levies among the classes for the Carle Place Public Library funding district, the local base proportions and the adjusted base proportions of such classes be calculated using the proportions for the 2003 tax year. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

A.6435-A, Jaffee This bill would repeal and re-create the Orangetown Public Library District to require that each member library individually submit its own budget proposal to the town. In addition, this bill would permit the town board to exercise its discretion with respect to all appropriations adopted for each library for the ensuing year. This bill was reported to the Assembly Rules Committee.

III. IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES

New Yorkers are fortunate to have one of the richest assortments of library resources in the nation. Even when resources are limited, New York maintains hundreds of chartered public or association libraries, 23 public library systems, nine reference and research library systems and numerous specialized libraries. In addition, 42 school library systems serve the over 1,400 school libraries located in elementary and secondary schools. From the New York Public Library, nationally recognized as one of the top research libraries in the world, to the smallest community-based book exchange, libraries play a vital role in the lives of New Yorkers.

The Assembly Libraries and Education Technology Committee considered legislation in 2009 designed to expand and improve libraries throughout New York State.

Increased funding for libraries

A.3895, Lifton This bill would amend Section 1 of Article XI of the New York State Constitution to require that the Legislature provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free public libraries where all residents of New York may be provided with public library services. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Public Library Construction Grant Program

A.6155-C, Paulin This bill would include the acquisition of vacant land within the scope of construction projects that are eligible for State aid. In addition, this bill would allow libraries that serve economically disadvantaged communities, as determined by the Commissioner of the State Education Department (SED), to be eligible to receive State aid for up to seventy-five percent of the approved total project costs. Finally, this bill would require that ninety percent of State aid be payable to each library or system upon approval of the application by SED and the remaining ten percent be payable upon completion of the project. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Library Procurement

Assembly Standing Committee on Governmental Operations
Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology

July 28, 2009
Hamilton Hearing Room B
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York

Libraries and library systems provide critical resources for the communities they serve. However, with the recent economic downturn and current budgetary constraints, libraries have had fewer resources to meet increased demand. It is more important than ever for libraries and library systems to pursue procurement methods that may save them money. The purpose of this hearing was to examine the means by which libraries and library systems in New York State may achieve savings through the State procurement process.

Bernard Margolis, New York State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, discussed the acquisition and licensing of online information resources and the creation of the New York State Comprehensive Information System, NYCIS.

Carla Chiaro, Deputy Commissioner of Procurement Services at the Office of General Services (OGS), and Anne Phillips, counsel at OGS, talked about some of the successful programs OGS has in place right now that aggregate purchases to save New York State money.

Michael Borges, Executive Director of the New York Library Association, discussed three key initiatives advanced by the New York Library Association that they believe would improve the ability of libraries to reduce their costs through cooperative bidding, sharing internet connections with BOCES, and enabling the State Library to negotiate statewide pricing for databases accessible to all libraries.

Jason Kramer, Executive Director of the New York State Higher Education Initiative, testified about the public and private academic and research libraries of New York State and the need for the State to create centralized contracts for electronic information resources.

Finally, John Smith, Chief Financial Officer of the Westchester Library System, discussed the benefits the Westchester Library System derives from the current State procurement process and ways to enhance the current system to make it better.

**Administration of Elections in New York State in compliance with the federal
Help America Vote Act**

Assembly Standing Committee on Election Law
Assembly Standing Committee on Education
Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology
Subcommittee on Election Day Operations and Voter Disenfranchisement

October 22, 2009
Assembly Hearing Room
250 Broadway, Room 1923
New York, New York

The purpose of this hearing was to examine the impact of the enacted 2009-10 State budget on New York State's implementation of the Help America Vote Act on the State Board of Elections, local boards of elections and other public entities that conduct elections, such as school districts, public and association libraries and fire districts.

Bernard Margolis, New York State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, testified on behalf of the New York State library and library systems. In his testimony, Mr. Margolis explained how the introduction of new voting machines and technology would impact libraries in two ways. First, new machines could have a financial impact by increasing the costs of elections. Second, new voting machines and technology would necessitate public education. Mr. Margolis volunteered New York State's public libraries as possible sites for the public awareness and public education work that he believes will be required to familiarize voters with the new voting machines.

Other individuals who testified at the hearing include: Mr. Robert Brehm, Ms. Virginia Martin, Mr. Marcus Cederqvist, Mr. George Gonzalez, Ms. Pamela Perkins, Mr. Steven Richman, Ms. Adrienne Kivelson, Ms. Andrea Novick, Ms. Nina Reznick, Mr. Howard Stanislevic, Ms. Teresa Hommel, Ms. Marjorie Gersten, Ms. Allegra Dengler, and Ms. Catherine Skopic.

V. COMMITTEE OUTLOOK FOR 2010

In the 2010 legislative session, the Committee's top priority will be to remain focused on maintaining library aid, including library construction aid. While the economic climate is currently unfavorable for expansion of state projects, it is essential to provide libraries with adequate resources. Additional goals for the 2010 session will include working to infuse funding into projects such as the Statewide Internet Library and the Talking Book and Braille Library, as well as examining library systems aid.

APPENDIX A

**SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON
LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

<u>FINAL ACTION</u>	<u>ASSEMBLY BILLS</u>	<u>SENATE BILLS</u>	<u>TOTAL BILLS</u>
<u>Bills Reported With or Without Amendment</u>			
To Floor; not returning to Committee	2	0	2
To Floor; Recommitted and Died	0	0	0
To Ways and Means Committee	4	0	4
To Codes Committee	0	0	0
To Rules Committee	0	0	0
To Judiciary Committee	0	0	0
Total	6	0	6
<u>Bills Having Committee Reference Changed</u>			
	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
<u>Senate Bills Substituted or Recalled</u>			
Substituted		0	0
Recalled		0	0
Total		0	0
<u>Bills Defeated in Committee</u>	0	0	0
<u>Bills Never Reported, Held in Committee</u>	0	0	0
<u>Bills Never Reported, Died in Committee</u>	23	1	24
<u>Bills Having Enacting Clause Stricken</u>	0	0	0
<u>Motion to Discharge Lost</u>	0	0	0
<u>TOTAL BILLS IN COMMITTEE</u>	29	1	30
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD	2		

**APPENDIX B
CHAPTERS OF 2009**

Bill Number/Sponsor	Chapter Number	Description
A.7185-A/ Gunther	Chap.377	Increases the number of members on the board of trustees of the Mamakating Library District.
A.7607/ Canestrari	Chap.321	Changes the Troy Library from a free association library to a special district library.