

### **State Aid Advocacy Update #3 - Good News!**

March 25, 2010

***You Are Making Progress!*** - Thursday afternoon the Senate Policy and Steering Committee on Ways and Means provided \$15 million for State Aid to Public Libraries in the Senate budget. We understand that efforts are underway behind the scenes in the House to get the full \$21.2 million. Earlier the House budgeted \$500,000 for State Aid to establish a budget line so that it could be taken up during the conference process. It is clear you and the folks you have mobilized have been heard, that legislators and the leadership want to fund libraries, and that we have champions working hard for us during these challenging times. We have seen real progress but we do not have the \$21.2 million needed so there is much work ahead.

***Your Advocacy Efforts Have Been Incredible!*** - The CapWiz advocacy e-mail platform provided to us by ALA has delivered over 26,000 messages in the last couple of weeks. We estimate that there have been about as many direct phone calls and e-mail messages. And folks continue to send more messages every day because the word is still spreading and new folks are contacting the Governor, legislators, and legislative leaders. Your efforts to mobilize your personal networks, to reach out to your communities, and make our issue **go viral** are working!

***Most Overwhelming Media Response for Florida Libraries Ever!*** - Florida's newspapers, tv stations, and even radio stations have responded very favorably to our message. Folks in libraries all over the state have done beautiful jobs in working with their local papers and TV stations to describe how their communities would be impacted if state aid is eliminated. Every day there are new newspaper reports and editorials. This is clearly the strongest media support and yes, public support that Florida libraries have ever received!

To see the coverage, do a Google News search on "Florida libraries."

***What Happens Next?*** - We need to continue our ongoing advocacy efforts knowing that we will have to make another big push during the appropriations conference committee meetings. The House and Senate will take their appropriations bills to the floor next week and they will probably announce their conference plans during the week of April 5th - 9th. With the session scheduled to end April 30th, the appropriations process is much farther along than in previous years and there is speculation that legislators will slow down after next week to give the public an opportunity to see what they are proposing and react to it.

***The Message*** - Thank you to the Senate and House members and leadership for making progress toward restoring State Aid and for your hard work on libraries' behalf but State Aid to Public Libraries needs to be restored to the current year \$21.2 million level. Local services will be badly harmed even with the Senate's \$15 million. State library funding has

already been cut by a third and many libraries' local budgets have been cut by over 30% with deeper cuts coming this fall.

***And Please, Please, Please Keep it Positive*** - These folks want to help us and your ***positive*** encouragement gives them the justification they need!

***Thank You!***

***Charlie -***