

## **State Aid Issue Update #2**

- March 17, 2010

**Here's Where We Are** - Yesterday the House Transportation and Economic Development Committee added \$500,000 to its budget for State Aid to Public Libraries. Chairman Rich Glorioso did this in order to insure that if State Aid funding does not get restored before conference, that it will be a conference issue. He also did it with the understanding that State Aid is not likely to be in the Senate TED budget when that Committee reports out its budget this Friday. At the same time Chairman Glorioso increased the Library Cooperative funding from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Chairman Glorioso helped us immeasurably by taking these steps.

Appropriations Committees in both chambers are scheduled to report out their bills in the coming days and both chambers plan to approve their bills before the Easter weekend. We do not expect that State Aid will be resolved until the Conference Committee process, not unlike last year. But stay tuned, all of this could change in a moment.

We believe that most legislators want to fund State Aid and it is our job to provide enough positive contacts so they know the public is behind them!

**What This Means About Advocacy** – We need to urge advocates to continue their activity but we are moving into an “ongoing mode” until around the beginning of the third week in April – Monday, April 12 when it will be “crisis time” again. At that time we will ask folks who have already made contacts to do so again. This is a good time to continue our work with TV and newspapers, networking with community organizations, and encouraging county commissioners to get engaged. Be thinking about what we did last week and what we will need to do next time to surpass this effort.

**Our Message** – Please, if you have not contacted your legislators, the Governor and legislative leaders urging them to continue funding State Aid to Public Libraries at \$21.2 million, please do so and please be prepared to do so again in mid April when the Appropriations Conference process begins!

**CapWiz Improvements Make a Difference Now & in the Final Effort** – Perhaps the easiest way for folks to contact legislators is through the CapWiz product that we get through ALA. We have been able to customize it so that folks can now send messages to the House and Senate Leadership – not just their legislators, the Governor and Lt. Governor as was the case earlier.

**Your Advocacy Efforts Are Working** – We are receiving lots of reports about local efforts and the traffic through CapWiz thus far includes over 13,000 e-mail messages from over 3,200 people. We estimate about an equal number have made direct contacts!

**What Folks Are Doing** – Here are just a few of the activities that we have heard about...

- ***Friends of the Library Networking*** – Friends of the Library all over the state have been mobilized by e-mail. We have received several indications that this effort has been very effective.
- ***Getting Commissioners Involved*** – More than a few folks report that commissioners are writing letters and contacting legislators. There are reports that commissioners in some areas are really taking our issue on!
- ***Picketing and Maintaining Visibility At the Capitol*** – Many thanks to Paul Clark and a group of folks in the Tallahassee area who have been picketing and waving signs at folks coming and going from the Capitol and talking up the media. Many thanks also to the folks who drove to Tallahassee Tuesday to help increase our visibility. Paul reports that more than 12 folks were sign waving Tuesday afternoon.
- ***Testifying Before Committees*** – Yesterday Jamie Cutlip with Unique Books who lives in Orlando made the trip to Tallahassee and spoke before the House Transportation and Economic Development Committee. Jamie did a great job! Cherry Alexander, from the State Library Council also spoke before a recent TED meeting.
- ***School Kids*** - Classes and groups of school children are writing the Governor, legislative leaders, and legislators.
- ***In-Library Advocacy*** - Friends of the Library are staffing tables in library lobbies, displaying our poster and distributing our message to the public. The poster developed by Bob Gorin and Mary Balint have proven to be very effective.
- ***Personal Networks*** –Folks are contacting friends and groups.
- ***Networking with Statewide Organizations*** – The Florida Association of Counties has been working the issue with their members and county lobbyists. Efforts to reach out to groups like the League of Women Voters and the Mysteries Writers of Florida have been successful and those groups are sharing our message through their statewide networks. The Small County Coalition has moved State Aid up on its priority list.
- ***TV Reports*** – Local advocates have been contacting area TV stations, bringing the issue to their attention, and several stations around the state have done reports. The Press Release helped too.
- ***Newspaper Stories*** – Many thanks to the folks at Salter>Mitchell, the public relations firm that did us the huge favor of distributing our press release to media outlets and editorial boards. We have had good coverage in all corners of the state including editorials or stories today in the Gainesville Sun, Florida Times Union, Suwannee River Democrat, and the Jackson County Floridan.

***Please Keep It Up & Please Keep Things Positive!***