

FLA Legislative Alert

Contacts Needed Regarding Proposed Mid-Year State Aid to Public Library Cuts

As you are aware, the Legislature will convene in Tallahassee January 5 to determine how to deal with a projected \$2.3 billion mid-year revenue shortfall. They will be looking at changes to the current budget for the year ending June 30, 2009. This message provides background regarding the budget process and urges library advocates to contact their legislators.

Background - In mid-December, House and Senate appropriations committees met in Tallahassee and began their deliberations by looking at options and on December 23rd, Governor Crist published his recommendations for how the state should respond.

The House and Senate Transportation and Economic Development Committees, those with primary responsibility for the funding of library programs in the Department of State budget, discussed State Aid to Public Libraries cuts ranging from \$2.8 to \$3.9 million because they were looking primarily at cuts, not additional revenues. The Governor's recommended State Aid cut is \$1.06 million, or 4% of the current \$26.7 appropriation, part of a 4% across the board hold-back implemented earlier in the year.

FLA is advising library advocates to support the Governor's proposed reduction. Arguing against any reductions in these budget circumstances would not be reasonable. There will be cuts; our objective is to keep them as small as possible.

Action Needed - It is important for Florida library advocates to contact their legislators before the January 5 Special Session. It is especially important for those advocates represented by members of the House and Senate Transportation and Economic Development Committees (below) to get the message to their legislators.

The Message - Support the Governor's proposed \$1.06 million reduction for State Aid to Public Libraries.

Sample Message for Legislators - The message below is provided to help library advocates communicate with their legislators. Remember, it is always good to "localize" your message and to provide real life stories about how issues affect your library and community.

And Above All – Keep It Positive! - Legislators are in a very, very difficult position. Our approach is to treat them with respect so that we build long term friends and champions!

Dear _____ (Representative, Senator, or Governor)

We understand the state is facing the worst budget challenges in modern times and we respect the fact that you will have to make difficult decisions and that no area will be exempt from cuts. We ask that you support the Governor's proposed \$1.06 million reduction to the State Aid to Public Libraries Program rather than the larger cuts of \$2.8 and \$3.9 proposed to the Senate and the House.

We ask that as you go about your deliberations, that you stay mindful of the benefits Floridians receive from Florida libraries – especially during difficult economic times like these.

- **Florida Libraries Help Residents Get Jobs!** Libraries provide services and information to help people find job postings, prepare resumes, and submit online applications.
- **Florida Libraries Help Government Deliver Services!** Libraries are the only provider of free Internet access in their communities and the place to go to access e-government services.
- **Florida Libraries Play a Critical Role in Kids' Learning!** – Libraries help young children learn to read and help parents and caregivers learn to be their children's first teachers. Children and families benefit from homework assistance programs, tutoring, support for homeschoolers, and casual library experience. Teens benefit from a safe environment for reading, computers, games and a place to socialize with adult supervision.

Thank you for your consideration and for the leadership you are providing at this critical juncture. All Floridians need to work together so that we can get through these challenging times!

Sincerely,

Your Name

Thank You!

Lisa Manners,
FLA Legislative Committee Chair

and

Danny Hales
FLA Public Library Directors Group Chair

Key Committees for Library Appropriations

Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Committee

- *In the House, library budget issues will originate in this committee*

- **Rep. Rich Glorioso (r), Chair** – Parts of Hillsborough & Pasco counties – rich.glorioso@myfloridahouse.gov / District (813) 757-9110/ Tallahassee (850) 488-0807
- **Rep. Greg Evers (r), Vice Chair** – Represents parts of Escambia, Okaloosa, & Santa Rosa counties – greg.evers@myfloridahouse.gov / District (850) 983-5550 / Tallahassee (850) 488-8188
- **Rep. Joe Gibbons (d), Ranking Democratic Member** – Represents part of Broward County joe.gibbons@myfloridahouse.gov / District (954) 893-5006 / Tallahassee (850) 488-0145
- **Rep. Jennifer Carroll (r)** – Represents parts of Clay & Duval counties – District / Tallahassee – jennifer.carroll@myfloridahouse.gov / District (904) 573-4994 / Tallahassee (850) 488-5102
- **Rep. Brad Drake (r)** – Represents Holmes, Washington & parts of Jackson, Okaloosa, & Walton counties – brad.drake@myfloridahouse.gov/ District (850) 892-8431 / Tallahassee (850) 488-4726
- **Rep. Audrey Gibson (d)** – Represents part of Duval County – audrey.gibson@myfloridahouse.gov/ District (904) 353-2180 / Tallahassee (850) 488-7417
- **Rep. Dorothy Hukill (r)** – Represents part of Volusia County – dorothy.hukill@myfloridahouse.gov / District (386) 322-5111 / Tallahassee (850) 488-6653
- **Rep. Janet Long (d)** – Represents part of Pinellas County – janet.long@myfloridahouse.gov / District (727) 545-6421 / Tallahassee (850) 488-6197
- **Rep. Lake Ray (r)** – Represents part of Duval County – Tallahassee – ray.lake@myfloridahouse.gov / (850) 488-4388
- **Rep. Robert Schenck (r)** – Represents parts of Pasco, Hernando, & Sumter counties – rob.schenk@myfloridahouse.gov / District (352) 688-5005 / Tallahassee (850) 488-6641

Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Committee

- *In the Senate, library budget issues will originate in this committee*

- **Senator Mike Fasano (r), Chairman** – Represents parts of Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, & Pinellas counties / fasano.mike.web@flsenate.gov / District (727) 848-5885 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5062

- **Senator Tony Hill (d), Vice-Chair** – Represents parts of Duval, Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, & Volusia counties – hill.tony.web@flsenate.gov / District (904) 924-1646 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5024
- **Senator Alex Diaz de la Portilla (r)** – Represents part of Miami-Dade County – portilla.alex.web@flsenate.gov / District (305) 643-7200 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5109
- **Senator Paula Dockery (r)** – Represents parts of Hernando, Lake, Osceola, Polk, & Sumter counties - dockery.paula.web@flsenate.gov /District (863) 413-2900 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5040
- **Senator Andy Gardiner (r)** – Represents parts of Orange, Osceola, & Seminole counties – gardiner.andy@flsenate.gov / District (407) 428-5800 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5047
- **Senator Chris Smith (d)** – Represents parts of Broward & Palm Beach counties – smith.chris.web@flsenate.gov / District (561) 650-6801 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5112
- **Senator Ronda Storms (r)** – Represents parts of Hillsborough, Pasco, & Polk counties – storms.ronda.web@flsenate.gov / District (813) 651-2189 / Tallahassee (850) 487-5072