

State Aid - Budget Chairs Restore State Funding to Public Libraries to \$21.2 Million

At midnight on Monday, April 26 the House accepted a Senate offer to restore State Aid to Public Libraries to the current year level of \$21.2 million. When Senate Budget Chair J. D. Alexander made the offer, he asked if "the library guy" with the signs was in the room. The library guy we all know is Paul Clark who has pretty much lived in the Capitol keeping the issue in front of legislators and the press for 6 weeks. Senator Alexander was disappointed that Paul wasn't there and said that other advocates could learn a lot from him.

There, working the issue until midnight were FLA lobbyist Chris Lyon, Small County Coalition coordinator Chris Doolin, and a whole contingent from the Department of State including Secretary Kurt Browning, Legislative Liaison Rivers Buford III, and John Boynton. This group barely left the Capitol all weekend long. Chris Doolin had a very positive impact for libraries, especially on Sunday morning. The folks from the Florida Association of Counties, and many county lobbyists have been working the issue aggressively as well.

For the past two months library advocates have worked tirelessly to tell the library story. The Salter>Mitchell public relations folks distributed press releases for FLA at several critical junctures. FLA's CapWiz wizard, Lisa Manners did an incredible job of keeping the message fresh with the result that library advocates generated over 60,000 messages in the last six weeks.

Thanks to everyone for their incredible efforts and congratulations on the wonderful success!

Charlie Parker, Chair
FLA Legislative Committee