

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker:
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STATEMENT OF BARBARA BAILEY, PRESIDENT
EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING
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My name is Barbara Bailey. I'm Director of the Welles-Turner Memorial Library in Glastonbury and President of the Connecticut Library Association. Our 1,000+ members include staff who work in all types of libraries, as well as library friends and trustees. CLA works with the CT State Library to promote library services for all CT citizens.

Today I'm here to express CLA's support for HB 7290, An Act Concerning Public Libraries. This bill contains clarifications of several issues that are important to CT's library community: the services which a principal public library must provide without cost; an increase in the maximum construction grant to public libraries from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000; and the inclusion of electronic publications in the State Library's state document depository and municipal document collection. It would also allow former members to serve additional terms on the State Library Board's Advisory Council on Library Planning and Development, an important opportunity for members of the library community to apply their expertise to the advancement of statewide library services. Many of these provisions were suggested by a statewide Task Force for Review of Public Library Statutes which was formed in December 2004.

CLA also supports the enhanced provisions concerning confidentiality of library records that are part of HB 7290. Like 47 other states, Connecticut has had a statute on confidentiality of library records in effect for some time. But the wording of our current statute protects the privacy of library users only in terms of circulation records maintained by public libraries. The new language in HB 7290 would expand this protection to include all library records that could be used to identify public library users or link them to library transactions.

Nothing in HB 7290 would prevent law enforcement officials from accessing library records as part of a criminal investigation. Libraries will continue to comply with court orders presented by and obtained from legitimate authorities. Adoption of HB 7290 would ensure that Connecticut libraries can continue to preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners - informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched.

I urge you to act favorably on this bill and thank you for your support of Connecticut's libraries.