

**The Hartford Superior Court Library Petition**

Connecticut's Executive Branch has cut \$12.9 million in the budget for the Judicial Branch, forcing the proposed closure of six law libraries across the state including the Hartford Superior Court Library.

These courthouse libraries serve to meet a diverse range of legal research needs from the judiciary, corporate and government attorneys, solo practitioners, average citizens and the indigent. The physical collections and online services available through these libraries, as well as the professional knowledge and expertise of law librarians, contribute to making Connecticut's court law libraries essential partners in the delivery of justice.

Connecticut's fifteen Judicial libraries annually receive an average of 480,000 web site visits, 250,000 walk-in visits, and staff answer a total of approximately 42,000 reference questions. These statistics demonstrate that our court law libraries are unique and essential.

The proposed closure of the Hartford Superior Court Library is especially alarming because Hartford has the largest caseload in the state, as well as the highest number of judges assigned to that judicial district. Library users depend upon Hartford's current and historic legal materials in all formats, and they value the court librarian for her unique knowledge and expertise.

Closure of this library will have a serious negative impact on pro se litigants who rely on the law library to gain access to legal materials they need to defend themselves in court. While we understand the dire budgetary circumstances that the state currently faces, it is essential that the Hartford Superior Court Library remain open. It is indispensable to the city's residents.

"The practice of law in Connecticut would certainly be hurt by the closing of these libraries. Why should the self-represented be put at a disadvantage because only selective districts provide reasonable access to a law library? Why should the small firm or solo practitioner be put at a disadvantage in their access to information that is necessary to fairly represent their client? Why should those judges, lawyers and litigants working in courthouses without a local law library be put at a disadvantage when doing research, or when at trial?

Pro se litigants, small firm attorneys and solo practitioners rely heavily on the courthouse law library's resources. Legal research needs to be done accurately to be effective. If individuals do not have access to the materials they need, or can't get to the resources in a reasonable time, they are put at a severe disadvantage in getting fair representation under the legal system." -- Nancy Marcove, President of the Southern New England Law Librarians Association

The American Association of Law Libraries and the Southern New England Law Librarians Association urge residents of Connecticut to join our efforts to save the Hartford Superior Court Library, slated for closure by July 1, 2010. Time is of the essence and we ask that you please add your name to the petition below.

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, join together in urging members of the Connecticut legislature to provide the Judicial Branch with adequate funding to keep the Hartford Superior Court

Library open, and we urge the Chief Court Administrator to reconsider her decision to close this library. It is crucial that the public value of the Hartford Superior Court Library is recognized and preserved to ensure equitable access to the law for all.

Thank you.

## The Hartford Superior Court Library Petition

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## The Hartford Superior Court Library Petition Additional Comments

*This is a poor choice for budget cutting. Pro-se patrons depend on these libraries to effectively represent themselves.* Steve Mirsky [mirskys@aim.com](mailto:mirskys@aim.com)

*The law libraries are an indispensable resource.* Karen Yeltema [yeltema@gmail.com](mailto:yeltema@gmail.com)

*These libraries are an essential part of a well run and effective government. Legislators - please don't shortchange the public or yourselves.* Susan Drisko Zago [s.zago@neu.edu](mailto:s.zago@neu.edu)

*In a city the size of Hartford, it is unconscionable to close the Superior Court Library. How are residents supposed to get the help they need if they can't use a local law library? Solo practitioners and small firms are especially vulnerable in this economy. They can't possibly purchase many expensive sets and databases that are readily available at Hartford's SC Library. Law libraries are more necessary in tough economic times, not less.* Lisa J. Arm [larm@bu.edu](mailto:larm@bu.edu)

*If the Law Library at Hartford is closed, there will be far-reaching repercussions for the local constituents, and for the the Law and Legislative department of the Connecticut State Library in particular.* Lori Sulmasy [loribuynow@gmail.com](mailto:loribuynow@gmail.com)

*Don't close the libraries.* Silvia Knox-Delamar [sknoxdelamar@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:sknoxdelamar@quinnipiac.edu)

*Until such time as we are governed solely by statute, we need those libraries. Keep 'em open!* Andrew Marchant-Shapiro [marchantshapiro@hotmail.com](mailto:marchantshapiro@hotmail.com)

*To ensure justice, it is necessary to do more than protect the right of all people to have access to and fair treatment before the courts. It is necessary to protect access to the language of the law itself.--excerpt from "Justice Requires Access to the Law" by Julia Wentz, Professor of Law, Director of the Law Library, Loyola University Chicago. Quoted by Philip D. Milks* [shnilks@aol.com](mailto:shnilks@aol.com)

*Please keep the library open.* Sean Hamill [sean.m.hamill@gmail.com](mailto:sean.m.hamill@gmail.com)

*The law libraries are necessary to the law profession.* Lisa C. Dumond [lisadumond@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisadumond@sbcglobal.net)

*As a librarian and a law student, I can't imagine a worse case scenario, in terms of critical access to legal information by all parties, than the closure of of the Hartford and other CT court libraries. We are all dependent upon the information contained therein and will be highly disadvantaged if they close.* Joan Emmet [joan.emmet@yale.edu](mailto:joan.emmet@yale.edu)

*As 1.) an attorney, 2.) a former MA Trial Court Law Library sub-contractor, and 3.) a current member of Florida State, Court and County Libraries, Inc., I can attest to the necessity of state court libraries to the administration of justice and function of the courts. Closing the library will have severe negative impacts on the courts as they will have to deal with more ill-prepared and uninformed litigants, represented and pro se.* Kelly Devlin [kamdevlin@comcast.net](mailto:kamdevlin@comcast.net)

*Access to a public law library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life. (Paraphrasing Henry Ward Beecher's "A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life.")* Peter Jenkins  
[lawlib43@yahoo.com](mailto:lawlib43@yahoo.com)

*"Although the Hartford Superior Court library is only a couple of blocks from the Connecticut State Library, I have found it to be an extremely valuable resource. I am a newspaper reporter, and I frequently litigate freedom-of-information cases on a pro se basis. One particularly valuable resource available in the Hartford Superior Court library and not in the Connecticut State Library is the electronic version of the Shepard's citation checking service, which is much easier to use than the cumbersome hard-copy version. In addition, due to the same budget difficulties that endanger the courthouse library, the State Library is now closed on Mondays, leaving the courthouse library as the only one in the immediate area that is open that day. (The University of Connecticut School of Law library is some distance away. To the best of my knowledge, the UConn law library has no electronic legal-research resources, other than the catalogue of its collection, available to members of the general public.)"* Alexander Wood  
[manchwoods@yahoo.com](mailto:manchwoods@yahoo.com)

*We criticized the Taliban and Communists for burning books. We may as well burn the law books if we are going to close the law libraries. What a preposterous idea! To ease the economic crisis, we should eliminate the jobs of those who want to close the law libraries. The Dark Ages are upon us.* Zbigniew S. Rozbicki  
[zsr@snet.net](mailto:zsr@snet.net)

*The Connecticut State Library is understaffed and will not be able to serve this needs of the clientele of the Hartford courthouse library.* Christine Graesser  
[briantoal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:briantoal@sbcglobal.net)

*"Law Libraries should be first priority to retain, not last. There are many other ways the budgets could be cost - and more effectively, to include getting rid of the dishonest judges who taint the reputations of all of the judges. Get rid of dishonest prosecutors instead of waiting for the state police to do something (as what happened with Mark Hurely in Milford - and is he getting a pension anyway despite committing over 180 counts of larceny and forgery? Probably! The Milford State's Attorney supported him until his sentencing was scheduled - then he reported to the paper that he was the one who requested the investigation. He didn't. State Police had already discovered through an informant that Hurley was stealing from the state's prosecutor's union - they had probable cause to investigate him at the Milford Courthouse--only within the peramaters of money, not relating to conduct that was illegitamate within the court system, of which he got away with on a continuous basis. Sure, make it more difficult for pro se's to get their rights. The public defender's office conspires with prosecutors oftentimes - and they are not made accountable. Transcripts are altered and the court reporters are blamed. It's not them - it is dishonest prosecution and/or dishonest judges. I realize a ""special"" machine has to be used to delete portions of the tape. I expect they get them illegally, or re-record the hearings. The latter mentioned would take a lot of time, I presume. It is more likely that they are getting the ""magic machines"" through an illegal market. Make this state accountable by getting rid of the corrupted judicial employees and legislators. That is my opinion.* Anne M. Bradley  
[bradley.annemarie@gmail.com](mailto:bradley.annemarie@gmail.com)