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The Milford 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 Milford 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 approximately 42,000 reference questions. These statistics demonstrate that our court law libraries are unique and essential.

The proposed closure of the Milford Superior Court Library is especially alarming because Milford will be the only Judicial District in the state that does not have access to a public law library. Library users depend upon Milford's current and historic legal materials in all formats, and they value the court librarian for his 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. These already disenfranchised individuals often lack transportation options to travel to a distant law library. While we understand the dire budgetary circumstances that the state currently faces, it is essential that the Milford Superior Court Library remain open. It is indispensable to Milford area residents.

"The Milford Bar Association and its members oppose the removal of the Milford Courthouse Law Library. While the computer access age of Internet information gives many benefits to practitioners, it is absolutely no replacement for the resources of the physical library. The staff librarian provides hands on research assistance to lawyers and the public alike for legal questions of all kinds. While our members are computer research savvy, they value the actual holding of a physical book in their hands when reviewing or investigating a law or issue. To remove this option is to do more than modify research practices; it is to teach the new generation that the books are not useful or essential." -- Ms. Tara J. Galbo, Esq., President of the Milford Bar 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 Milford Superior Court Library, slated for closure by April 1, 2010. Time is of the essence and we ask that you please add your name to the petition today.

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 Milford 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 Milford Superior Court Library is recognized and preserved to ensure equitable access to the law for all.

Thank you.

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