

FARMINGTON LIBRARIES
Since 1901

Jay Johnston M.S., M.A.
Executive Director, CEO

RE: Remarks on February 6, 2013 supporting Connecticut General Assembly Proposed Bill No. 5614 a bill that would require publishers of electronic books to license e-book titles offered to the general public to libraries.

Good afternoon Sen. Doyle and committee members. I am Farmington Library director Jay Johnston and I'm here to tell you that we are in deep trouble. I am also here to thank you for your decision to take on this important and leading position for the people of Connecticut and the people of the United States of America.

I'm not here to disparage those publishers who will not sell to us or those publishers who sell to us only at a premium price. I'm here to alert and send the word forward that the public libraries of Connecticut cannot sustain in the 21st century without the partnership we have enjoyed with publishers over the past hundred years. In that relationship we have engendered a love of reading, provided a platform for young people, pre-K, adolescent, young adults, adults and the elderly to enjoy reading and to facilitate access to reading materials.

A history lesson: Andrew Carnegie as a young man came to this country with very little but the shirt on his back. At that point in American history, libraries required membership that cost money which Carnegie did not have. He found ways to learn what he needed to learn without libraries because of his genius. But at the end of his life when he was divesting his wealth, he knew that if he had the access to libraries he needed as a young man, his journey would have been a great deal less arduous and his successes even greater. It is because of this that Carnegie built libraries across America making America better for hundreds of millions of people he would never know.

In closing, I will ask each of you to pick up the shield of justice and hold it high and say that Connecticut cannot tolerate American publishers turning their backs on the institutions which have made them a success. We need e-books from all the publishers with all the authors. We need a partnership that will allow libraries to give access to elderly people who want to read and can read e-books because e-books allow the flexibility of increasing the font size so that one page can become 8 views which even I can read with my tired old eyes. The legality of this is a moral one and shrieks out for justice. I am so proud that you all have the courage to go forward with this important legislation.

Thank you so very much...