

**PLEASE SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 5477 – AAC A STATE-WIDE PLATFORM FOR
THE DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRONIC BOOKS**

The Members of the Connecticut Library Association are grateful to the General Law Committee for raising House Bill 5477.

Last year, the General Law Committee passed 2013 House Bill 5614, Special Act 13-10, which requested the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection to look at Connecticut's E-book marketplace.

On January 30th of this year, the Department issued to the General Law Committee its report entitled: *Report to the General Assembly's General Law Committee pursuant to Special Act 13-10, "An Act Concerning a Study Regarding the Availability of Electronic Books to Users of Public Libraries."* On page 15 of the Report, the Department provided the following as a recommendation:

Invest in a State run e-book distribution platform so as to provide the State's libraries with greater flexibility in acquiring and managing their e-content and increased negotiating power when dealing with publishers or other owners of e-content.

The purpose of House Bill 5477 is to give the authority to the State Library Board to actually carry out this fine recommendation. House Bill 5477 simply amends the State Library Board's Authorizing Statute – Section 11-1a – to grant the board the authority for the "creation and maintenance of a state-wide platform for the distribution of electronic books to public library patrons."

Libraries in Connecticut have a long tradition of statewide cooperation; sharing resources; and leveraging dollars through state services such as Connecticutcard; iCONN; and the Connecticut Library Consortium.

In harmony with the Department's recommendation, we believe that Connecticut citizens will enormously benefit from a statewide eBook service, with its own eBook platform.

- A statewide eBook platform hosted by the State Library would ensure equity of access to eBooks by all residents of Connecticut, regardless of income, education, or geography.
- A statewide eBook service would make it possible for users of all libraries in the state to access the titles directly using their local library card.
- A statewide eBook platform hosted by the State Library would free up local library funds currently used for platform fees for the purchase of books and other materials, and continue to furnish services on which their users rely.
- A statewide eBook platform hosted by the State Library would build on the success and demonstrated success of iCONN,

We respectfully believe that the State Library Board will need \$1 million for development of the platform – that would include consulting, hardware and licensing; and an initial \$1 million in initial eBook content. We would purchase an initial collection through a vendor that way it would be a bondable cost. We also believe that one new position to oversee this project on an ongoing basis at a salary of \$85,000/per year. **We will be asking our friends from the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee to help us fund this project.**

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5477. GO LIBRARIES!!