

Farmington Libraries

Jay Johnston

Executive Director, CEO

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State of Connecticut

Legislative Appropriations Committee Hearings

RE: Governor Malloy's proposed FY- 16-17 biennium budget specifically: Bill No. 942, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION

Dear Committee members:

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Jay Johnston, Executive Director of the Farmington Libraries, and State Library Board member, here to speak specifically in favor of restoring funding to: Connecticard, the Connecticut Library Consortium and Grants to Public Libraries.

I can understand the State's budgetary need for structural modification to achieve fiscal sustainability. However, the proposed biennium budget Bill No. 942 eviscerates the fabric of cooperative regional and statewide library services by removing the corpus of aid to local municipalities. This aid is key to regional and local cooperation between municipal libraries and allows our citizens the right to borrow a book in Greenwich and return it to Groton. This is achieved by paying a very small part of the items cost to the lending library at year-end through a net performance based program called Connecticard. Indeed, obliterating this program does little to help us manage our resources but rather creates a vortex of uncertainty and

unintended consequences that will hurt those who are most vulnerable in our society, the very young, the very old and the poor. The Connecticut Library Consortium negotiates book and materials contracts and provides valuable services to the library professionals annually while the State Grants to Public Libraries provide additional resources for general library programming.

Each of these programs is important to the economic, educational and social strength of our state and I implore each of you to consider the importance of keeping these programs and recognizing each of them as an aide to the municipalities each of you represent.