

LEGISLATORS OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Hearing on the Proposals for the Upcoming State Budget
Hartford, CT
Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Sirs:

The FRIENDS OF THE EAST HARTFORD LIBRARY strongly urge you to maintain present funding for Connecticut, CLC, and Grants to Public Libraries of our State.

Speaking with regard to the situation of the East Hartford Library, we ask you to consider the needs of our many lower-income residents, many of whom use the town libraries and especially their computers to find employment or to further their educations, as well as to explore the world of books, DVDs, and the variety of reference materials which would be far more difficult to access were library funds cut in the upcoming budget.

At the East Hartford Library's main branch the seats at the public computers and reading areas are generally occupied, with time limits on computer use to give access to the high number of individual users. This is a poor town, in many ways part of the inner city, with many inhabitants who lack private sources of job-related and pleasurable materials. Many of our young elementary and middle-school students, including a substantial immigrant population; numerous high school students; and older residents studying at nearby colleges including Manchester Community, Goodwin, and even Trinity, rely on the library for research and for quiet study areas. Cutbacks in the library funding would directly affect their lives.

Additionally, the Governor has recently raised the question of reintegrating people with criminal records into society. I personally know of a young man who found refuge--warmth and books to read--at our library and at Hartford Public Library while he was homeless and trying to make sense of his life. Some of the materials he absorbed during those days have helped him to find excellent employment. The libraries offer an important aid to solving our recidivism issue in a way beneficial to both the ex-convict and society as a whole.

The Friends of the Library, taxpayers too, see libraries as an essential element of our State's social net and cultural offerings. Please continue their funding.

Very truly yours,
Paul J. LaRocca
President
EAST HARTFORD FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY