



Office of  
Commonwealth Libraries

Dear Library Community -

I am writing regarding the impact Senate Bill 850 will have on the future of libraries in Pennsylvania.

Despite the extremely difficult economic situation, the budget that Governor Rendell proposed in February reduced the library subsidy by just 1.5% in recognition that **Pennsylvanians need their libraries more than ever**. In contrast, the budget proposed under Senate Bill 850 **cuts the state library subsidy in half – a move that would lead to drastic cuts in services, resources, library staffing and** reduces the subsidy's buying power to 1995-1996 levels. A 50% cut on the state subsidy will have the devastating impact of reducing local library operating budgets by 10% to 40%.

In addition, Senate Bill 850:

- Eliminates the POWER Library
- Eliminates Reciprocal Borrowing (Statewide Library Card Program)
- Eliminates the agency's support for Interlibrary Delivery Service
- Eliminates virtual reference (Ask Here PA)
- Eliminates construction funds by eliminating the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation grants to libraries

SB850 will further impact libraries as the reduction in state funds will cause Pennsylvania to lose \$3.8 million in federal LSTA funds. This reduction represents 63% of the federal funds that support children's programming, the grant program, program innovation and the development of school, public and academic libraries.

It is not an overstatement to say the library community is at a crossroads. Without a reversal of this reduction to library appropriations, the combined impact of lost state and federal funding will jeopardize the statewide infrastructure among school, public, academic and special libraries that has been built and built up over one hundred years. Please make your voices heard.

You have demonstrated the value of libraries in communities, campuses and schools. Libraries have proven themselves a worthy investment of public dollars and public trust. In good times and in bad, you have demonstrated to your elected officials the public's use of, dependence on and affection for their library. Please make your voices heard.

I am asking for your immediate help. Please work with your community at all levels to contact your legislators making them aware of the devastating effect of SB850 on our libraries which will have a devastating effect on all those you serve so well. Please make your voices heard.

To find your legislator go to: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/session.cfm>  
and type in your zip code in the upper right (“Find Members By Zip Code.”)

If you have already written your legislator, please write again. I cannot overstate how critical it is for you to take this stand for libraries this year.

Thank you.

M. Clare Zales

Attachment: Impact of Senate Bill 850

**Pennsylvania Department of Education ♦ Office of Commonwealth Libraries**  
**Deputy Secretary for Libraries**  
**c/o 333 Market Street ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17126-1745**  
**717-787-2646 ♦ [mzales@state.pa.us](mailto:mzales@state.pa.us)**