



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

New York State Assembly

Carl E. Heastie

Speaker

Committee on

**Libraries and
Education Technology**

Didi Barrett

Chair





Didi Barrett

Assemblymember 106th District
Columbia County
Dutchess County

**THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY**

CHAIR
Libraries and Education
Technology

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
Environmental Conservation
Mental Health
Tourism, Parks, Arts and
Sports Development

December 15, 2018

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 349
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

I am honored to present to you the Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology for the 2018 legislative session. It was my privilege to serve as Chair of this Committee and to have worked with you and the rest of my colleagues to provide much-needed support and assistance to New York's library community.

The Assembly Majority and the Committee on Libraries and Education Technology are dedicated to working to increase resources for libraries throughout New York State. The 2018-19 enacted budget provided \$96.6 million in state aid for libraries and library systems. The budget also maintained funding for the Conservation and Preservation Program and the Talking Book and Braille Library. Finally, the budget provided \$34 million in funding to continue statewide library capital projects, a \$10 million increase over the previous budget.

Libraries and library systems efficiently and equitably provide critical services, education and access to information to New Yorkers. Libraries provide:

- Early literacy programs for preschool children in many languages;
- Resources and homework help for school-age children;
- Workforce development programs including Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and workshops for adults in job-seeking or resume-writing;
- Access to literature and arts through book groups and workshops;
- Trained facilitators to help families enroll in the New York State Health Marketplace;
- Resources and assistance to help people complete their taxes;
- Assistance for seniors applying for Social Security and Medicare; and
- Access to the internet for many low-income and rural residents who have none at home.

Our constituents overwhelmingly support their libraries. Generally, 97% of library budgets are approved by voters. Only in a public library is so much available free of charge. In more than two-thirds of New York communities, public libraries are the only source of free internet access. For many low-income families, the local library is the primary source of internet access. Without such access, many New York residents would find it difficult or impossible to research employment opportunities, file their income taxes, apply to college, and become informed voters. The Assembly Majority has made it a priority to secure the funding necessary to help libraries maintain these services.

Among the important work that libraries will continue to need funding for is preparation for the 2020 Census, which will be conducted online and will use significant library resources. I look forward to the upcoming session as we continue to work to ensure that our libraries get the support that they need.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee and all of the members of the Assembly Majority for their commitment and dedication to the work of the Committee. I would also like to thank you for your unwavering support of this Committee on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Didi Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Didi Barrett
Member of Assembly

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES
AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

Didi Barrett, Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Steven Otis
Michaëlle C. Solages
Brian Barnwell
Inez E. Dickens
Yuh-Line Niou
Erik Bohén

Minority

Mary Beth Walsh
Philip Palmesano

Staff

Maria Volpe-McDermott, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Steven R. McCutcheon, Legislative Analyst
Benjamin Decker, Associate Counsel
Kristin Williams, Legislative Director
Jeannine Barcher, Program and Counsel Executive Secretary

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I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The Libraries and Education Technology Committee was created in 1997. It has jurisdiction over legislation affecting public, academic, school and private libraries as well as the administration and funding of libraries and library systems across New York State. The Committee has endeavored to assist libraries in sustaining and upgrading their infrastructure and staff resources. The Committee has also attempted to assist libraries in meeting the challenges of the information age and providing New Yorkers access to technological resources.

New York State has over 7,000 libraries – some among the largest and the best in the country. Six of the 40 largest libraries in the United States are in New York, more than any other state. New York's largest library, the New York Public Library, contains over 10 million volumes and is among the top research institutions in the world.

Libraries have become a modern community center playing an integral part in the education and cultural development of New Yorkers. New York libraries provide a wealth of print and electronic resources that offer individuals and communities access to every type of information. Today libraries provide a central location for those who seek information, those who seek recreation or those who seek social interaction with members of their community.

II. PROVIDING LIBRARIES WITH NECESSARY RESOURCES

New York State libraries work hard to meet the diverse needs of our state. However, public, academic and school libraries need adequate resources and reliable funding sources. The Committee's efforts and commitment to providing libraries with sufficient resources reflects the Assembly's longstanding support for libraries and the educational, economic and cultural roles they play in their communities.

Funding for New York's libraries has been and continues to be a priority for the Assembly Majority. To meet the funding needs of New York libraries, Chapter 917 of 1990 was enacted to establish a formula to provide stable funding for libraries and library systems based on the most current census population numbers.

The 2018-19 state budget provided \$96.6 million in state aid for libraries and library systems. The enacted budget also maintained funding for the Conservation and Preservation Program and the Talking Book and Braille Library at a combined \$693,000. Finally, the budget provided \$34 million in capital funding, an increase of \$10 million over last year. These construction funds are crucial, as nearly half of the state's library buildings are over 60 years old.

In addition, the Committee advanced some significant local legislation to benefit New York's library community.

Local Library Legislation

A.5265, Friend; Passed Assembly: This bill would allow the Chemung County Library District to vote for any proposed budget at the annual election conducted by the Chemung County Library board of trustees or at the annual general election conducted by the local board of elections.

A.5811, Quart; Reported to Ways and Means: This bill would allow public libraries, through a competitive grant process, to apply for and receive Employment Preparation Education funds that provide educational services such as employment skills, English as a Second Language courses and pre-GED classes. Additionally, half the amount would be targeted to New York, Queens and Brooklyn Public Libraries.

III. IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES

New York State is the home to hundreds of public, school, association and private libraries. It has 23 public library systems, and nine reference and research library systems. It has 41 school library systems serving over 1,400 school libraries in elementary and secondary schools. It has hundreds of private libraries. From the largest library to the smallest community-based book exchange, all of New York's libraries play a vital role in our communities.

The Committee acted on several important measures in 2018 designed to expand and improve libraries throughout New York State.

Aid for Public Libraries

A.10834, Barrett; Passed Assembly: This bill would allow public libraries in economically disadvantaged communities to receive library construction grants. Additionally, this bill would allow the funds to be used to purchase vacant land for the potential of revitalizing neighborhood projects that are near abandoned city centers.

A.10835, Barrett; Passed Assembly: This bill would allow library systems to submit one joint application for the public library construction grant program in order to achieve cost savings through coordinated purchasing.

A.10836-B, Barrett; Passed Assembly: This bill would authorize funding of up to 90% of project costs from the state for construction projects by public libraries located in economically disadvantaged communities.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Funding of public libraries in New York State for fiscal year 2017-2018

The 2017-18 budget provided \$95.6 million in state aid for libraries and library systems. In addition, the 2017-18 budget allocated \$24 million to the Public Library Construction Grant Program, an increase of \$5 million over the previous fiscal year.

The committee conducted a hearing on January 10, 2018 in Albany, New York. The hearing sought to assess the impact of the 2017-18 state budget on public libraries and library systems. The Committee heard about the programs and services libraries are providing in their local communities and how libraries are collaborating and using technology to better leverage their resources. The Committee also heard about the future funding needs of our public libraries and the Public Library Construction Grant Program.

The Committee heard testimony from a broad spectrum of the library community: MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner, and Mark Schaming, Deputy Commissioner, Cultural Education, State Education Department; Mike Nepl, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, New York Library Association; David Woloch, Executive Vice President, External Affairs, Brooklyn Public Library; Iris Weinshall, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, New York Public Library; Jonathan Chung, Director of Government Affairs, Queens Library; Nick Buron, Chief Librarian, Queens Library; Kathleen Gundrum, Executive Director, Capital District Library Council; Dr. Colleen Sadowski, Director of School Library Systems and Media Services, Rochester City School District; J'aime Pfeiffer, School Library System Director, WSWHE BOCES; Robert Hubsher, Executive Director, Ramapo Catskill Library System; Tom Sloan, Executive Director, and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Coordinator for Library Sustainability, Mid-Hudson Library System; Lauren Moore, Executive Director, Pioneer Library System; Wanda Bruchis, Director, Mid York Library System; Christopher Sagaas, Director, Utica Public Library; Timothy Burke, Executive Director, Upper Hudson Library System; and Scott Jarzombek, Director, Albany Public Library.

The essential programs and services that libraries provide to their communities and the challenges facing libraries in the 21st century

The Committee conducted a hearing on December 7, 2018 in Albany, New York. The hearing sought testimony about the programs and services libraries are providing in their local communities, including the role libraries may play leading up to and during the 2020 Census. In addition, the Committee heard testimony on the impact of the 2018-19 State Budget on the mission of public libraries and library systems in the 21st century, including the future funding needs and challenges of public libraries and the Public Library Construction Grant Program.

The hearing documented that libraries and library systems are a model of efficiency because of their effective use of collaboration and modern technology. The hearing also documented the need for increased state investment in our libraries and library systems and the importance of preparing for the 2020 Census.

The Committee heard testimony from a broad spectrum of the library community: MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner, and Mark Schaming, Deputy Commissioner, Cultural Education, State Education Department; Mike Neppl, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, New York Library Association; Nick Higgins, Chief Librarian, Brooklyn Public Library; Caryl Matute, Interim Chief Branch Library Officer, New York Public Library; Jonathan Chung, Director of Government Affairs, Queens Library; Nick Buron, Chief Librarian, Queens Library; Kathleen Gundrum, Executive Director, Capital District Library Council; Dr. Jennifer Cannell, School Library Systems and Arts Coordinator, Capital Region BOCES; Robert Hubsher, Executive Director, Ramapo Catskill Library System; Terry Kirchner, Director, Westchester Library System; Lauren Moore, Executive Director, Pioneer Library System; Christopher Sagaas, Director, Utica Public Library; Timothy Burke, Executive Director, Upper Hudson Library System; and Scott Jarzombek, Director, Albany Public Library.

V. COMMITTEE OUTLOOK FOR 2019

The Committee's top priorities in the 2019 legislative session will be the following:

First, maintain and increase Aid to Public Libraries. Despite a significant increase in the 2018-19 enacted state budget, state aid is still less than statute requires.

Second, maintain and increase statewide library construction aid. With approximately half of New York's public library buildings being 60 or more years old, it is essential to provide libraries with adequate resources.

Third, advance local legislation important to the library community. With an increasingly diverse New York State population, we must provide each library with the flexibility it needs to properly serve its community.

APPENDIX A

**SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON
LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

| <u>FINAL ACTION</u> | <u>ASSEMBLY BILLS</u> | <u>SENATE BILLS</u> | <u>TOTAL BILLS</u> |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | |
| <u>Bills Reported With or Without Amendment</u> | | | |
| | | | |
| To Floor; not returning to Committee | 3 | | 3 |
| To Floor; Recommitted and Died | 1 | | 1 |
| To Ways and Means Committee | 2 | | 2 |
| To Codes Committee | 0 | | 0 |
| To Rules Committee | 0 | | 0 |
| To Judiciary Committee | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | |
| Total | 7 | | 7 |
| | | | |
| <u>Bills Having Committee Reference Changed</u> | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | |
| Total | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | |
| <u>Senate Bills Substituted or Recalled</u> | | | |
| | | | |
| Substituted | | 0 | 0 |
| Recalled | | 0 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Total | | 0 | 0 |
| | | | |
| <u>Bills Defeated in Committee</u> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <u>Bills Held for Consideration with a Roll-Call Vote</u> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <u>Bills Never Reported, Held in Committee</u> | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| <u>Bills Having Enacting Clause Stricken</u> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <u>Motion to Discharge Lost</u> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | |
| <u>TOTAL BILLS IN COMMITTEE</u> | 17 | 3 | 20 |
| | | | |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD | 1 | | |
| | | | |