Dear Committee Members,

The State Library programs and services cannot be cut further. Please do not vote in favor of the Governor's current FY 18-19 budget that proposes to reduce funding for Connecticut State Library and specifically the funding for Cooperating Library Service Units.

Libraries are not a luxury. They provide free essential services and information for Connecticut’s citizens from birth to death. Libraries are especially critical during tough budget times. When funding is cut from state and local education and social service programs, the populations no longer served don’t just go away. Instead, those seeking assistance go to their local library for information and solutions. Funding libraries at the state and local level is critical to keeping this “safety net” in place.

Library programs are cost effective. The ROI on state funding for researchIT (the statewide databases) is approximately 2,000%; for deliverIT it is approximately 8,000%; for borrowIT it is approximately 9,000%; and for the Cooperating Library Service Units is approximately 1,200%. For every 1 dollar of state funding invested in Cooperating Library Service Units, the state’s libraries realize $19.37 in savings.

Connecticut Library Consortium - a model of statewide savings
The Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC) is the sole remaining Cooperating Library Service Unit of the six units established by General Statute 11-9e in 1975 “to improve library service through coordinated planning, resource sharing and the development of programs too costly or impractical for a single library to maintain.” We negotiate discounts on critical resources and supplies for over 800 of Connecticut’s libraries and schools; discounts not available through other state purchasing organizations. And we’ve been very successful- last year we saved CT
libraries nearly 7.5 million dollars. These savings were not only on books, but also on products that fill important needs in the community like early literacy materials, databases to help people find jobs, programs and testing materials for adult learners and immigrants, and accessibility tools for those with low vision, hearing loss or learning disabilities. We help libraries preserve our past by negotiating discounts on archival materials, and we help them build future workforce skills with our discounts on 3-D printers and other Maker supplies.

The Connecticut Library Consortium needs a hand up, not a hand out. CLC currently receives a little over $124K in state funding via a State Library Operating grant. This grant was cut by 47% two years ago and another 33% last year; the highest cut to any State Library program. We are currently budgeted to be funded at this lower rate in FY18-19. Since the initial cuts of 2015, we have reorganized and streamlined our operations, and invested in a business development plan to help us be less reliant on state funding and more sustainable. But we need time and stable funding to implement these new funding models and programs. The 33% holdback of our FY17-18 funding and the continuance of this holdback for FY18-19 will require us to deplete our reserves and cripple our efforts to be more self-reliant and sustainable within the next few years. Please restore our funding so we can continue our work to provide centralized discounted purchasing on critical library products and services.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jennifer O. Keohane
Executive Director
Connecticut Library Consortium