

December 15, 2008

The Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 346
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Silver:

I am honored to present to you the Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology for the 2008 legislative session. My second session as Chair of the Committee saw a renewed commitment to New York's library community. I look forward to working with you and the rest of my colleagues to continue providing much-needed support and assistance to our State's libraries.

The Assembly Majority and the Committee on Libraries and Education Technology are committed to working to maintain resources for the libraries of New York State. With the enactment of Chapter 917 of the laws of 1990, libraries were provided with a regular and steady funding formula, making it possible for them to expand the scope of services offered to the public.

As a participant in this year's joint Conference Committee on Education, I am proud to have played an active part in a budget process that helped restore \$5 million in formula supplemental grants for library systems and \$14 million for statewide library capital projects. This restoration of aid displayed the Assembly Majority's strong commitment to libraries and library systems throughout the State.

Our State's libraries offer a range of essential services to the public, including Internet access, literacy programs and research material, and employ staff with the skills to support these services. The Assembly Majority has made it a priority to secure increased funding necessary to help libraries maintain these services. I look forward to the upcoming session as we continue to work to ensure that our libraries get the support they need.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee, as well as 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 "Amy R. Paulin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Amy R. Paulin
Member of Assembly

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES
AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

Amy R. Paulin, Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Barbara M. Clark
Michael A. Benjamin
Susan V. John
David Koon
Ellen Young
Kenneth Zebrowski

Minority

Philip M. Boyle
Marcus J. Molinaro

Staff

Mark Casellini, Principal Legislative Coordinator
Heather Clawson, Legislative Analyst
Suzanne Bolling, Associate Counsel
Cailin Kovalsky, Committee Clerk
Laura Inglis, Program and Counsel Executive Secretary

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I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The Libraries and Education Technology Committee was created in 1997 under the leadership of Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. The Committee has jurisdiction over legislation introduced concerning the many issues affecting public, academic, school and private libraries. The Committee develops and reviews legislation affecting the administration and funding of libraries and library systems across New York State. As today's explosion in information technology has placed new demands on libraries, we are mindful of our responsibility to ensure that New York's libraries will be able to meet the challenges of the information age. The work done by the Committee assists libraries to sustain the infrastructure and staff resources necessary to allow all New Yorkers access to technological advances available through New York's vast library community.

Libraries are integral to the educational and cultural development of all New Yorkers. Through a wealth of electronic and print media, New York's libraries provide individuals and communities with exposure to information that broadens their intellectual, social and cultural experiences. New York State has over 7,000 libraries that serve our citizens in many capacities. Many of these libraries are among the largest and the best in the country. Of the forty largest libraries in the United States, six are located in New York, more than in any other State. New York's largest library, the New York Public Library, contains over ten million volumes and is among the top research institutions in the world. Among New York's most cherished resources, our libraries provide support for all those in search of information, knowledge, enlightenment or inspiration, whether they are students, teachers, researchers, academicians, authors, readers, job seekers, entrepreneurs or consumers.

As libraries are called upon to play an expanding role in educating New Yorkers, it is imperative that our libraries receive the attention and support they require to answer the call as we move forward in the 21st century.

II. PROVIDING LIBRARIES WITH NECESSARY RESOURCES

The libraries of New York State work hard to meet the needs of the populations that they serve. However, those needs may vary widely, even within one district. Public, academic and school libraries cannot serve their patrons without an adequate and reliable source of funding. The New York State Assembly has long supported libraries and the educational, cultural and economic roles they play in their communities. The Assembly Majority is committed to providing libraries with resources to meet the needs of all of our state's citizens. Providing these resources requires a well-focused policy commitment as well as significant state financial support.

The Assembly has made increased funding for New York's libraries a priority. To meet the funding needs of New York libraries, Chapter 917 of 1990 was enacted, establishing a formula which was designed to provide stable funding for both library systems and individual libraries based on the most current census figures. Unfortunately, from 1998 until 2006, Governor Pataki left funding rates for libraries unadjusted, leaving New York's libraries and library systems severely underfunded. With each year that funding remained stagnant, libraries and library systems lost valuable buying power and the ability to expand and respond to the growing needs of their communities.

In 2008, the Assembly ensured that an extraordinary amount of additional funding was made available to libraries and library systems across the state. The Assembly worked to ensure that the state's libraries and library systems were once again funded at current census levels and included supplemental aid for libraries in the final budget. This amount of library aid included a restoration of \$5 million in formula supplemental grants for funding library systems in addition to a continuation of \$14 million in funds for statewide library construction projects. These funds come at a critical time for libraries, with library systems cutting back on much-needed services and nearly half of the state's library buildings 50 or more years old.

The final budget for Fiscal Year 2008-09 provided \$99.4 million in aid for libraries and library systems, which as a result of across-the-board Executive budget cuts represents a 2.7% decrease from the FY 2007-08 budget allocation of \$102.2 million. In August of 2008, the Legislature was called back by the Executive, amid falling state revenues, in order to address the state's budget deficit and as a result aid for libraries was reduced to \$98.5 million. The Assembly has advanced several initiatives to provide new resources for New York's libraries and library systems.

Local library legislation

A.11189, Canestrari; Chapter 422 of 2008 This law changed the Troy Library from a free association library to a special district library. As a result of this legislation, there will now be a public vote on the library's budget and trustees.

A.11178, Lavine; Chapter 233 of 2008 This law includes the Plainview-Old Bethpage public library on the list of libraries eligible for financing assistance from the Dormitory Authority.

A.10982, Walker; Chapter 446 of 2008 This law extends the deadline for the creation of the Brookville library district from 2003 to 2010.

A.10577, Oaks; Chapter 459 of 2008 This law creates the Palmyra Community Public Library District in Wayne County. The new district includes the town of Palmyra exclusive of a portion of the town of Palmyra contained within the Newark Central School District. The creation of the library will be contingent upon a public budget vote.

A.10543-A, Townsend This bill would create a special legislative district public library serving the town of Constantia, in Oswego County, known as the North Shore public library; provide that candidates for the office of member of the board of trustees shall be nominated by petition; direct that the budget of such library shall be subject to the approval of the voters; and further provide that no monies shall be disbursed by the treasurer of the library district except after audit by the board of trustees. This bill passed the Assembly.

Preserving special library collections

A.4082-A, Brodsky This bill would require public libraries with collections of more than one hundred thousand items to develop deaccessioning policies to ensure public access and preservation of special collections. This bill passed the Assembly.

III. IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES

New Yorkers are fortunate to have one of the richest assortments of library resources in the nation. Even when resources are limited, New York maintains hundreds of chartered public or association libraries, 23 public library systems, nine reference and research library systems and numerous specialized libraries. In addition, 42 school library systems serve the over 1,400 school libraries located in elementary and secondary schools. From the New York Public Library, nationally recognized as one of the top research libraries in the world, to the smallest community-based book exchange, libraries play a vital role in the lives of New Yorkers.

The Assembly Libraries and Education Technology Committee considered legislation in 2008 designed to expand and improve libraries throughout New York State.

Scholarships for librarians

A.3467-A, Galef This bill would establish 50 library science scholarships, up to \$5000 each, for graduate students who agree to work as a librarian in a children's service center, primary or secondary school library, or in a public, academic or special library in New York State for four years. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Loan fund for libraries

A.3702-A, Pretlow This bill would establish a public library revolving loan fund to provide financial assistance in the form of low-interest loans for the construction, improvement, expansion or rehabilitation of library buildings. Under the program, libraries and library systems could receive an amount up to \$500,000, based on their programmatic and fiscal needs. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Increased funding for libraries

A.6255-A, Eddington This bill would provide for an increase in library aid based on a cost-of-living adjustment factor based on increases in the consumer price index. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

A.10145, Paulin This bill would increase funding for family literacy programs from \$300,000 to \$1.2 million annually. Family Literacy Grants fund innovative programs that help prepare children and their parents/caregivers for entering school, using the public library as an integral part of learning during the child's school years and involve parents in their children's education from an early age. The funding level has been frozen at \$300,000 since 1996. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

A.10348, Paulin This bill would increase the merger incentive aid for school library systems that merged before April 1, 2008 to \$90,000. Current law provides that school library systems that merged after April 1, 2008 receive \$90,000 annually while school library systems that merged before that time only receive \$50,000 annually. This bill would cure this funding discrepancy. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Librarians in elementary schools

A.8543, Galef This bill would require school districts to employ certified school library media specialists in all elementary and secondary schools, unless there is a shortage of library media specialists in the district's area or the school district's needs are met through a sharing agreement with a public library. Currently, state education regulations contain staffing requirements for school library media specialists in secondary schools. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Training for library trustees

A.10277-A, Paulin This bill would require trustees of libraries and library systems to complete at least six hours of training regarding financial oversight, policymaking, and accountability. Under the bill, the commissioner would be authorized to expend \$500,000 for the development and administration of the trustee training program coordinated by the New York State Library and conducted by the public library systems which would each receive an annual grant of \$3,000 for the purposes of this program. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

NY Library Initiative

A.10547, Paulin This bill would seek to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to quality library services so they can compete and achieve in school, the job market and business. The bill would amend state aid formulas to libraries to make permanent an \$8 million increase in aid to library systems and provide \$20 million in permanent construction aid to libraries. It would also provide \$10 million annually for a Statewide Internet Library, inflationary increases for all libraries, \$500,000 for a new program for trustee training and support, \$1 million for Summer Reading Programs, \$5 million for new collaborative early literacy programs among public libraries and public broadcasting stations, \$800,000 increase for libraries serving the disabled and \$750,000 for Saturday hours for the State Library and State Archives. This bill was reported to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

IV. COMMITTEE OUTLOOK FOR 2009

In the 2009 legislative session, the Committee's top priority will be to remain focused on maintaining library aid, including library construction aid. While the economic climate is currently unfavorable for expansion of state projects, it is essential to provide libraries with adequate resources. Additional goals for the 2009 session will include working to infuse funding into projects such as the Statewide Internet Library and the Talking Book and Braille Library, as well as examining library systems aid.

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	1	0	1
To Floor; Recommitted and Died	0	0	0
To Ways and Means Committee	15	0	15
To Codes Committee	0	0	0
To Rules Committee	1	0	1
To Judiciary Committee	0	0	0
Total	17	0	17
<u>Bills Having Committee Reference Changed</u>			
	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
<u>Senate Bills Substituted or Recalled</u>			
Substituted		2	2
Recalled		0	0
Total		2	2
<u>Bills Defeated in Committee</u>	0	0	0
<u>Bills Never Reported, Held in Committee</u>	1	0	1
<u>Bills Never Reported, Died in Committee</u>	20	3	23
<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>	38	5	43
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD	2		

**APPENDIX B
CHAPTERS OF 2008**

Bill Number/Sponsor	Chapter Number	Description
A.11178	Chap.233	Includes the Plainview-Old Bethpage public library on the list of libraries eligible for financing assistance from the Dormitory Authority.
A.11189	Chap.422	Changes the Troy Library from a free association library to a special district library.
A.10982	Chap.446	Extends the deadline for the creation of the Brookville library district from 2003 to 2010.
A.10577	Chap.459	Creates the Palmyra Community Public Library District in Wayne County.