

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY • SHELDON SILVER, SPEAKER



# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Committee on  
Libraries and Education Technology

*Fred W. Thiele, Jr., Chair*



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STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

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FRED W. THIELE, JR.  
Assemblyman 1<sup>st</sup> District

CHAIR  
Assembly Committee on  
Libraries and Education Technology

December 15, 2014

The Honorable Sheldon Silver  
Speaker of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 349  
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 2014 legislative session. It is my privilege to serve as Chair of this Committee and I look forward to working 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 the libraries of New York State. The enacted budget for 2014-15 fiscal year provided \$87.927 million in state aid for libraries and library systems. This is an increase of \$1 million from the 2013-14 budget allocation of \$86.927 million. The budget also maintained funding for the Conservation and Preservation Program and the Talking Book and Braille Library making their total funding \$693,000. Finally, the budget provided \$14 million in funding to continue statewide library capital projects for the ninth consecutive year.

In addition, the Committee was able to advance some very important legislation this session. A main legislative priority for the Committee was a measure that required the Queens Borough Public Library to amend its by-laws, in relation to the membership and duties of the board of trustees and provide additional oversight of the executive director and key library personal. Additionally, this law authorizes the Mayor and Borough President to remove any trustee for misconduct, incapacity, neglect of duty, or where it appears to the satisfaction of the appointing party that the trustee has failed or refuses to carry into effect its educational purpose. Another priority for the Committee was legislation that helps provide aid to libraries.

Our State's libraries offer a range of essential services to the public, including Internet access, literacy programs and research materials, and employ staff with the skills to support these services. The Assembly Majority has made it a priority to secure the 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 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,

Fred W. Thiele Jr.  
Member of Assembly



**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES  
AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Fred W. Thiele Jr., Chair**

**Committee Members**

**Majority**

Thomas J. Abinanti  
Barbara M. Clark  
Steven Otis  
Samuel D. Roberts  
Michaelle C. Solages  
Kenneth Zebrowski

**Minority**

Philip A. Palmesano  
Joseph S. Saladino

**Staff**

Christian Malanga, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy  
Steven R. McCutcheon, Legislative Analyst  
Gregory Berck, Associate Counsel  
Lisa Lombardo, Committee Clerk  
Jeannine Barcher, 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 in sustaining the infrastructure and staff resources necessary to allow all New Yorkers access to the 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 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Assembly Majority has long supported libraries and the educational, economic and cultural 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 Majority has made increased funding for New York's public libraries a priority. To meet their funding needs, Chapter 917 of 1990 was enacted establishing a formula which was designed to provide stable funding for both libraries and library systems based on the most current census figures. The enacted budget for 2014-15 fiscal year provided \$87.927 million in state aid for libraries and library systems. This is an approximate increase of \$1 million, over the 2013-14 budget allocation of \$86.927 million. The final approved budget also maintained funding for the Conservation and Preservation Program and the Talking Book and Braille Library totaling at \$693,000. Finally, the budget provides \$14 million in funding to continue statewide library capital projects. This is the ninth consecutive year that the Assembly Majority has provided this level of funding for library construction. These construction funds have come at a crucial time for libraries, as nearly half of the state's library buildings are 60 or more years old.

In addition to increased funding for Aid to Public Libraries, the Committee was able to advance some very important local legislation for the library community across New York State.

### Local library legislation

**A.9241-A, Lentol; Chapter 323 of 2014** This law adds the Brooklyn Public Library and the Queens Borough Public Library to the list of libraries that are eligible for financing through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.

**A.9459, Skoufis; Chapter 345 of 2014** This law adds the Moffat Library of Washingtonville to the list of libraries that are eligible for financing through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.

**A.9372, Skartados; Passed Assembly** This bill would clarify how trustees will be elected to the Greater Poughkeepsie Library board.

**A.9847-A, Cahill; Passed Assembly** This bill authorizes the Starr Public Library, currently a free association library, to re-charter as a special district public library subject to a referendum of the voters.

### **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, 41 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 2014 designed to expand and improve libraries throughout New York State.

#### **Aid for Public Libraries**

**A.8732, Thiele; Chapter 148 of 2014** This law extends provisions authorizing public libraries in economically disadvantaged communities to receive 75% instead of 50% aid for capital improvement projects. Additionally, this bill would continue to allow libraries to receive 50% aid of the total project cost for the acquisition of vacant land.

**A.8852, Thiele; Chapter 287 of 2014** This law authorizes the Commissioner of Education to grant maintenance of effort waiver for a period of up to three consecutive calendar years. Furthermore the law would remove the limit placed on the number of maintenance of effort waivers that the Commissioner could grant.

#### **Queens Borough Public Library Reform**

**A.9217-B, Aubry; Chapter 45 of 2014** This law will require the Queens Borough Public Library to amend its by-laws, in relation to the membership and duties of the board of trustees and provides additional oversight of the executive director and key library personal. Additionally, this law authorizes the Mayor and Borough President to remove any trustee for misconduct, incapacity, neglect of duty, or where it appears to the satisfaction of the appointing party that the trustee has failed or refuses to carry into effect its educational purpose.

#### **IV. COMMITTEE OUTLOOK FOR 2015**

In the 2015 legislative session, a top priority of the Committee will be to remain focused on increasing Aid to Public Libraries and statewide library construction aid. With approximately half of New York's public library buildings 60 or more years old, it is essential to provide libraries with adequate resources. Additional goals for the 2015 session will include advancing important local legislation for our library community and continuing to advance legislation designed to expand and improve our libraries and library systems throughout New York State.

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>
<b><u>Bills Reported With or Without Amendment</u></b>			
To Floor; not returning to Committee	2		2
To Floor; Recommitted and Died			
To Ways and Means Committee	6		6
To Codes Committee	1		1
To Rules Committee	0		0
To Judiciary Committee	0		0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>9</b>
<b><u>Bills Having Committee Reference Changed</u></b>	0		0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
<b><u>Senate Bills Substituted or Recalled</u></b>			
Substituted		2	2
Recalled		0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b><u>Bills Defeated in Committee</u></b>	0	0	0
<b><u>Bills Held for Consideration with a Roll-Call Vote</u></b>	1	0	1
<b><u>Bills Never Reported, Died in Committee</u></b>	12	2	14
<b><u>Bills Having Enacting Clause Stricken</u></b>	1	0	1
<b><u>Motion to Discharge Lost</u></b>	0	0	0
<b><u>TOTAL BILLS IN COMMITTEE</u></b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD</b>		3	

**APPENDIX B  
CHAPTERS OF 2014**

<b>Bill Number/Sponsor</b>	<b>Chapter Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
A.8732/ Thiele	Chap. 148	This law will continue to allow public libraries in economically disadvantaged communities to receive 75% of project costs from the state for construction projects by public libraries aid for capital improvement projects. Additionally, this bill would continue to allow libraries to receive 50% aid of the total project cost for the acquisition of vacant land.
A.8852/ Thiele	Chap. 287	This law will allow the Commissioner of Education to grant such maintenance of effort waiver for a period of up to three consecutive calendar years. Furthermore the law would remove the limit placed on the number of maintenance of effort waivers that the Commissioner could grant.
A.9217-B/ Aubry	Chap. 45	This law will require the Queens Borough Public Library to amend its by-laws, in relation to the membership and duties of the board of trustees and provides additional oversight of the executive director and key library personal. Additionally, this law authorizes the Mayor and Borough President to remove any trustee for misconduct, incapacity, neglect of duty, or where it appears to the satisfaction of the appointing party that the trustee has failed or refuses to carry into effect its educational purpose.

A.9241-A/Lentol	Chap. 323	This law adds the Brooklyn Public Library and the Queens Borough Public Library to the list of libraries that are eligible for financing through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.
A.9459/ Skoufis	Chap. 345	This law adds the Moffat Library of Washingtonville to the list of libraries that are eligible for financing through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.