



COMMITTEE ON
Libraries & Education Technology

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY



CARL E. HEASTIE, *Speaker*

SEAN M. RYAN, *Chair*



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THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Libraries and Education
Technology

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December 15, 2019

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to present to you the 2019 Annual Report of the Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology. The work accomplished during the 2019 legislative session reflects the commitment of the Committee and myself to ensure libraries and library systems throughout the state continue to be community hubs providing critical services, educational resources, and access to information for all New Yorkers.

The Assembly Majority and the Committee is dedicated to increasing resources for libraries throughout New York State. The 2019-20 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 enacted budget provided \$34 million in funding to continue statewide library capital projects.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their continued contributions to this past year's achievements. Finally, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership and support of our libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean M. Ryan".

Sean Ryan
Chair, Committee on Libraries and Education
Technology

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**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

Sean Ryan, Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Steven Otis
Michaelle C. Solages
Brian Barnwell
Inez E. Dickens
Yuh-Line Niou
Karen M. McMahon

Minority

Robert Smullen
Mary Beth Walsh

Majority Staff

Maria Volpe-McDermott, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Benjamin Decker, Associate Counsel
Kate Meyer, Counsel, Committee Clerk
Jeannine Barcher, Program and Counsel Executive Secretary

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------|
| I. | COMMITTEE JURISDICTION..... | 1 |
| II. | STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS..... | 2 |
| III. | IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES | 3 |
| IV. | PUBLIC HEARINGS..... | 4 |
| V. | COMMITTEE OUTLOOK FOR 2020 | 5 |
| | APPENDIX A: 2019 SUMMARY OF ACTION ON COMMITTEE BILLS..... | 6 |

I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology was created in 1997. It has jurisdiction over legislation affecting public, academic, school and special 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, as well as meeting the challenges of the information age. Libraries have become modern community centers playing an integral part in the education and cultural development of New Yorkers.

New York State is home to a total of 73 library systems: 23 public library systems, nine reference and research library systems, and 41 school library systems. There are 756 public libraries statewide. 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. Statewide, over 19 million people utilize New York State's public library systems. From the largest library to the smallest community-based book exchange, all of New York's libraries play a vital role in our communities.

During the 2019 Session, 19 bills were referred to the Libraries and Education Technology Committee. This report provides a detailed examination of the Committee's budgetary and legislative achievements in 2019.

II. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

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. Chapter 917 of the Laws of 1990 established a formula to provide stable funding for libraries and library systems based on the most recent census data.

State Aid

The Legislature provided \$96.6 million in state aid for libraries and library systems.

The Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) is a free library service for eligible residents of upstate New York who are unable to use standard print materials due to a visual or physical disability. TBBL serves over 15,000 New Yorkers. The Legislature maintained funding for the Conservation and Preservation Program and the Talking Book and Braille Library at a combined \$693,000.

The Legislature also maintained \$250,000 for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and \$75,000 for the Langston Hughes Community Library.

Capital

The Legislature provided \$34 million in funding to continue statewide library capital projects.

III. IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES

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

A.3771-A, Barrett; Chapter 381 of the Laws of 2019: This law authorizes funding for up to 90% of project costs from the state for construction projects by public libraries located in economically disadvantaged communities.

A.3781, Barrett; Chapter 389 of the Laws of 2019: This law allows library systems to submit one joint application for the public library construction grant program in order to achieve cost savings through coordinated purchasing.

A.7441-A, Ryan; Veto Message #166 : This bill would direct the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Tax and Finance, public libraries and association libraries, to conduct a study and issue recommendations by December 31, 2020 regarding the frequency of residents who are being double taxed or assessed library taxes for more than one library district.

A.7568, Ryan; Chapter 192 of the Laws of 2019: This law extends for 3 years until March 31, 2023 provisions of the public library construction grant program, which authorizes state aid for up to 75% of project costs for library construction projects located in economically disadvantaged communities.

IV. HEARINGS

A. Funding of New York State's Libraries

The Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Educational Technology held a hearing on Friday, December 13, 2019 in Albany on the impact of the 2019-20 enacted state budget on libraries and library systems and the future funding needs of public libraries. Specifically, the Committee sought testimony on the programs and services libraries are providing in their local communities, the long-term capital needs of libraries, as well as how recently enacted legislation (A.3771A/S.5589) that provides state funding for up to 90 percent of the total project approved costs for construction of public libraries in economically distressed communities will impact those libraries and communities.

The Committee heard testimony from the State Education Department, New York Library Association, New York Public Library, Queens Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, Upper Hudson Library System, Guilderland Public Library, Albany Public Library, Ravena, Coeymans, Selkirk Library, Troy Public Library, Mid York Library System, Mohawk Valley Library System, Monroe Library System, Rochester City School District, Chili Public Library, Mid-Hudson Library System, Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, Southern Adirondack Library System and the Long Island Library Resources Council.

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, the general application of the Public Library Construction Grant Program, and the potential benefits of the enhanced 90% funding for certain projects within the Construction Grant Program.

V. OUTLOOK FOR 2020

For the upcoming legislative session, the Committee will continue to advocate for an increase in Aid to Public Libraries and capital funding to ensure our libraries are adequately funded. Since approximately half of New York's public library buildings are 60 or more years old, it is essential to provide libraries with adequate resources.

In addition, the Committee will continue to 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 the needs of its community.

APPENDIX A

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

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD: 1

| | <u>ASSEMBLY BILLS</u> | <u>SENATE BILLS</u> | <u>TOTAL BILLS</u> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO | | | |
| TO CODES | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TO JUDICIARY | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TO WAYS AND MEANS | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| TO RULES | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TO FLOOR | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| COMMITTEE ACTION | | | |
| HELD FOR CONSIDERATION | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DEFEATED | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ENACTING CLAUSE STRICKEN | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| REMAINING IN COMMITTEE | 14 | 1 | 15 |
| BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO: | | | |
| TOTAL | 0 | 0 | 0 |