



New York Library Association

The Voice of the Library Community

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Press Release

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New Poll Shows Continued Public Support For Increase in State Aid for Libraries

The New York Library Association commissioned a recent Zogby Poll that confirmed continued public support for increased state aid for library services and book purchases.

Poll respondents were asked whether libraries deserved more state financial support and despite uncertain economic times - 57% still responded in the affirmative. "Despite a potential \$4.3 billion state budget deficit, a majority of New Yorkers still believe libraries are an important part of our educational system and deserve continued state investments", stated Michael J. Borges, Executive Director of the New York Library Association.

Library Aid had been frozen between 1998 and 2003 and was cut by \$4.5 million in 2004. The cut was restored in 2005 and Library Aid was finally increased by a modest \$3 million in 2006. In 2007, the Legislature increased operating aid again by \$5 million, recognizing the continued need to invest in the state's information infrastructure, libraries and library systems, to make up for eight years of flat and reduced funding.

Poll respondents were also asked whether the state should provide increased funding for libraries to specifically purchase books and an overwhelming 82% responded favorably. Currently, school libraries receive \$6.25 per pupil to purchase books, college libraries receive \$1.90 per student and public libraries receive no direct aid to purchase books. The average cost of a school library book is \$23, the average for a public library book is \$45 and the average cost for a college library book is \$60.

The Board of Regents supports the New York Library Association's proposal to increase state aid to school libraries to \$10 per pupil and NYLA is also requesting \$7.6 million in book aid for public libraries and \$2 million in book aid for college libraries.

"Reading and books are a fundamental part of learning at any age and New York needs to do more to promote literacy and access to reading materials for all New Yorkers. The most cost effective way to do this is to support the purchase of books by libraries that can be shared among many," continued Mr. Borges.

In addition, the poll queried respondents on how frequently someone in their household uses the library regularly and 65% replied that someone in their household used the library in the past year.

The telephone poll was conducted January 2nd thru Jan. 7th and surveyed 708 New York adults.

