



Public Library Systems Directors Organization

## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

### **S4435 (May) / A6121 (Jean-Pierre)**

*An act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring members of a board of trustees of public, free association and Indian libraries to complete continuing education.*

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If enacted, this bill would require that individuals serving on a public or association library board of trustees complete a minimum of two hours of continuing education credits per year. Trustee education is defined as the instruction, in person and/or online that addresses the powers', function and duties of libraries and boards, the financial oversight, accountability and fiduciary responsibilities of library boards, and the laws, rules, and regulations that govern public, free association and Indian libraries to be done on an annual basis by an organization or institution designated as eligible to provide trustee education.

Over 6,000 library trustees in New York State are responsible for governing 755 local public libraries with 1,065 facilities. New York currently has over 10 million library cardholders throughout our State. Library trustees are required by law to be good stewards of \$1.3 billion in public and private annual income, \$3.3 billion in library collections and several billion dollars in other critical public assets such as library buildings and equipment.

New York is a diverse state and the scope of this responsibility is wide ranging, from urban libraries serving millions of people with budgets over \$100 million to rural libraries serving small, geographically isolated communities with budgets of less than \$10,000. Regardless of the size of the community, size of the library or size of the library's budget, library board members need basic training.

Library governance grows increasingly more complex every year, and library board members need training throughout their service in order to understand and effectively carry out their mandated duties and responsibilities and to be accountable for the appropriate use of public funds.

Public and association library trustees and board members are an essential element in providing oversight and guidance to help maintain the effective and efficient administration of a local library. Library board members, who are versed in the powers, functions and duties of their positions, including their fiduciary responsibilities, will be better able to provide effective oversight and help a library meet its mission and be accountable to the local community, thereby protecting the public interest.

Library systems in partnership with the New York State Library and New York Library Association have developed comprehensive training programs and materials to empower library trustees with knowledge, skills and resources for acting as good stewards of public institutions. However, there is no legislation that requires trustees to take advantage of these resources.

The Public Library Systems Directors Organization (PULISDO) strongly supports the above referenced legislation and urges your approval.

For additional information, please contact Sarah Glogowski, PULISDO Chair, at 607.319.5601.