



2015 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Exempt Public Libraries and Library Systems from the MTA Payroll Tax Martins S.214 / Abinanti A.218

Background:

- Current law exempts some educational institutions, such as primary and secondary schools, from the MTA Payroll Tax, but does not exempt public libraries or library systems. This bill would put libraries on equal footing with other educational institutions.
- Though not currently exempt, libraries are first taxed and then reimbursed for MTA payroll tax costs. This is an inefficient process that has a negligible effect on the MTA, but a significant effect on libraries as they are often forced to reduce staffing and curtail programming.

Impact:

- This measure would put libraries on equal footing with other local, public educational institutions regarding the MTA Commuter Tax.

Expand Access to School Libraries and Librarians

Background:

- Currently, elementary schools are not required to staff a certified School Library Media Specialist. Secondary schools are only required to do so in Commissioner's Education Regulations, not by state statute. Many school districts disregard the Commissioner's regulations; the NYC Department of Education previously sought a waiver from this requirement.
- Students with access to school libraries staffed by certified School Library Media Specialists consistently score 15-20% higher in English Language Arts tests by the fourth grade according to a study conducted at Syracuse University.
- Certified School Library Media Specialists provide open access for students, staff and families to a varied, high-quality collection of reading materials across all formats. They collaborate with teachers to select the most engaging and appropriate resources and learning experiences to co-teach subject content.

Impact:

- Passing this bill would ensure that all students, K-12, have access to a school library staffed by a certified school librarian. Having access to a certified school librarian would ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to develop strong digital literacy, critical thinking and information literacy skills regardless of economic status or school.

Taxpayer Access to Publicly-Funded Research

Background:

- This legislation requires New York State funded research published in peer-reviewed journals be made available online by the state agencies that underwrite such research. This bill would bring NYS in line with the federal standards employed by the National Institute of Health and the State of California.
- Currently, when publically-funded research is published in peer-reviewed journals, libraries must expend public dollars for public and scholarly access.

Impact:

- This bill would eliminate the need for libraries to use tax dollars to pay for public access to publicly-funded research and would follow the federal model.