



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SIENA RESEARCH POLL: 90% OF NEW YORKERS DEMAND INCREASED LIBRARY FUNDING, OPPOSE GOVERNOR CUOMO'S FUNDING CUTS FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

TWO MILLION NEW YORKERS RELY ON LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY AS PRIMARY SOURCE OF INTERNET ACCESS, INCLUDING 25% OF LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

CONFIRMS PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR WOMEN, COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

ALBANY, NY – Two recently-conducted Siena College Research Institute polls confirm that New Yorkers increasingly rely on the critical services provided by their local public library, and found near-unanimous opposition to Governor Cuomo's second round of devastating library funding cuts in four years.

New York State Education Law calls for a minimum level of state funding necessary to ensure quality library services in each neighborhood and community. The minimum funding for FY2017-18 is \$102.6 million, though state policymakers have failed to provide even this minimum level of funding since 2007. With last year's repeal of the Gap Elimination Adjustment, chronic underfunding for library services continues to ignore the needs of New Yorkers – particularly those needs of economically vulnerable citizens and historically disadvantaged communities.

As New Yorkers increasingly identify their local public libraries as crucial providers of childhood literacy programs and career enhancement services, these polls also found libraries serve as indispensable points of internet access: for more than 2 million New Yorkers, including 25% of respondents with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000, their local public library serves as their primary point of internet access.

The Siena poll findings include:

- 90% of New Yorkers favor increased state library funding; including a clear plurality supporting full funding under the law;
- 60% of respondents support increased funding for capital projects;

- 92% of respondents indicate that public library services are an important part of their local education infrastructure; including 96% of women, 98% of African-Americans, 95% of Latinos, and 97% of households earning less than \$50,000 annually;
- 60% of respondents have used the services of their local library in the last six months; including a jump in usage across demographics since polling was first conducted in 2012;
- For 20% of African-American and Latino respondents, and for 25% of households earning less than \$50,000 annually, the local public library is their primary source of internet access;
- Nearly 80% of respondents indicate that this free access to broadband internet is important in their community, including 90% of African-Americans and 85% of Latinos;
- 85% of New Yorkers support a change in law that would guarantee students access to school library services in their school.

These results make clear that Governor Cuomo and state policymakers are out of touch with New Yorkers when it comes to valuing library services – 90% support increased funding, and 92% consider their public library as a core component of their local education infrastructure. State Library Aid should be fully-funded under the law, but funding must at least increase in proportion to any increase in overall education funding.

About NYLA:

The New York Library Association (NYLA) educates and advocates on behalf of New York’s library community. NYLA is the oldest state library association in the country and represents school, college, special and public libraries, library staff, trustees, and students from around the state.

NYLA is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff in Albany and serves as the spokesperson on library matters to the media and public policymakers.

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