

April 5, 2017

**Peninsula Library and Historical Society**

**Testimony Before the House Finance Committee**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee. My name is Barbara Kaplan. I am the President of the Board of the Peninsula Library and Historical Society. Thank you for the opportunity to describe how reductions in funding impacts our local library.

Our library serves the northern Summit communities of Peninsula, Boston and Cuyahoga Valley national Park. It's not a large library, but it provides the same services as other libraries. We loan materials, provide community programming for adults and children, and host community events. Right now we are providing exhibition space for art created by Woodridge Public Schools students.

Last week you heard from Michelle Francis on behalf of the Ohio Library Council. She gave you their perspective on the importance of maintaining the Public Library Fund at 1.7% for all libraries. I am here to describe what happened in Peninsula when funding fell below that level.

Staff hours were cut by 20 percent. Forty hour work weeks became thirty-two hour work weeks. Our library didn't open on Friday and Sunday.

One of the most important services we provide is to the children of our community. Before funding was cut we had a full time Children's librarian. With reduced funding the

number of children's programs dropped by 42%. The position of archivist was completely eliminated.

These cuts were felt throughout our community. Attendance at adult programs dropped by 13 percent and circulation dropped by 17 percent. Since our state funding is based on circulation, the cuts put our library into a death spiral. The budget cuts caused our circulation to decline, and the decline in circulation caused further reductions to our funding.

Travel and meetings were eliminated. Our librarians could not attend required continuing education to maintain their Certified Public Librarian status.

More recently some of the funding has been restored and that allowed us to restore work hours and re-open on Fridays. However, we still have not fully recovered and remain closed on Sundays.

We still cannot provide full student access to our facilities including tutoring. Working adults still do not have much opportunity to access all the things we want to provide including help with their taxes and resources for business research. We still don't have money to hire an archivist and are unable to organize, digitize and preserve our historic materials at the library. Included in these materials are significant documents about the history of the Cuyahoga River Valley. Our librarians are working double or triple time to catch up on their certification training.

In conclusion, maintaining the Public Library Fund at its current 1.7% is critical to our library's ability to provide adequate services to our community.

Thank you. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.