



**OHIO SENATE
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
CHAIRMAN – THE HONORABLE RANDY GARDNER

OHIOANA BUDGET HEARING TESTIMONY – HB 64
May 12, 2015**

David Weaver, Executive Director

Chairman Gardner and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ohioana Library Association. I am pleased to be joined by several members of the Ohioana Board of Trustees, a diverse and committed corps of volunteer leaders who represent every region of the state. A roster of our trustees is attached to this testimony.

This is my first time to testify before a Senate committee since becoming Executive Director of Ohioana in September 2013, succeeding Linda Hengst, who retired after 25 years.

The Ohioana Library Association, which last October celebrated the 85th Anniversary of its founding by Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper, is the model of a successful public/private partnership between the State of Ohio and a not-for-profit organization.

With the support of the Governor and the General Assembly and citizens from across the state, the Ohioana Library connects readers and Ohio writers, serves as the caretaker of Ohio's rich literary heritage, and contributes to the dynamic educational, cultural, and artistic environment that promotes Ohio as a state on the move, bringing jobs, growth, and prosperity.

We are grateful that Governor Kasich recognized our unique role in serving the state and its citizens in his “Blueprint for a New Ohio” by recommending the Ohioana Library Association receive \$155,000 in FY2016 and \$160,000 in FY2017 under our line item 355501, with our rental payments of \$120,114 for each year covered under line item 350401 of the State Library of Ohio budget.

As the bill made its way through the full House Finance Committee, an amendment was offered to move our allocation under the Ohio History Connection and to maintain it at its current \$140,000. After discussions with Representative Mike Duffey, chair of the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education, our operating allocation, still flat-funded was removed from the Ohio History Connection and instead put it completely to line item 350401, along with our rental payment under the State Library of Ohio.

I am here to specifically ask this committee and the Ohio Senate consider our request to:

- Return our funding to existing line item 355501 and at the Governor’s recommended level of funding - \$155,000 in FY2016 and \$160,000 in FY2017

- Continue support of Ohioana rental payments under line item 350401 in the State Library budget at \$120,114 in FY2016 and \$120,114 in FY2017

First, let me say that we believe that the Ohioana Library, through its unique mission and programs, merits its singular identity within the state budget just as the unique mission and programs of the State Library of Ohio and Ohio History Connection merit theirs.

Mission and Programs

In July 2014, the Ohioana Board of Trustees revised and updated our Mission Statement:

Ohioana collects, preserves, and celebrates Ohio literature and other creative endeavors.

This revision was part of a year-long planning process that which has resulted in a new Five-Year Strategic Plan that will carry Ohioana to its 90th Anniversary in 2019.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to Ohioana's three core programs:

Collection and Reference which supports researching, developing, maintaining, and making accessible to the public a growing collection of over 75,000 items written by Ohioans or about Ohio subjects.

Educational Outreach, which supports the production and distribution of approximately 10,000 copies of the *Ohioana Quarterly* each year, which is used by libraries, bookstores, and the general public to select books and serves as an invaluable source of information about Ohio writers and literary events. The program also supports partnerships with libraries and agencies that promote reading, writing, and literacy, such as the Ohio Literary Map, Poetry Out Loud, and Choose to Read Ohio.

Public Programs, which includes the annual Ohioana Literary Awards - among the oldest and most prestigious literary awards in the country. Past winners include 2015 Pulitzer Prize winner Anthony Doerr and 2014 National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson. The Ohioana Book Festival is held every spring and is free and open to the public. The most recent festival, presented as the Sheraton Columbus, drew more than 100 Ohio authors and nearly 3,500 attendees to the main event, including attendees not only from across Ohio but from five states – Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Kentucky. Including outreach and media, the Ohioana Book Festival reached a total audience of more than 50,000 people. In only eight years, it has become the single largest literary event in the state and one of the largest in the midwest.

Through its collection, print and online publications, educational partnerships, and public programs, Ohioana directly serves more than 100,000 Ohioans each year.

2016-17 Priorities and Programming

Our priorities in the coming biennium are to:

- Develop, maintain, and grow the collection of over 75,000 items from or related to Ohio and Ohioans and provide reference services to consumers

- Provide educational outreach by means of the Ohioana Quarterly, Ohioana Newsletter, Ohioana website, social media, and project partnerships with Ohio Arts Council and State Library of Ohio
- Promote reading and writing through the annual Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Literary Awards, On the Road series, and other events throughout the state of Ohio

Specifically, the funding we are asking be restored to the level recommended by the Governor will support Ohioana staff and will help it to leverage private support to:

- Produce the annual Ohioana Book Festival with participation from 100 authors, 3,500 attendees, and an outreach audience of 50,000
- Produce the annual Ohioana Literary Awards to recognize outstanding achievement by Ohio authors with a live and virtual audience of 5,000
- Publish the *Ohioana Quarterly*, which serves as a resource for readers and libraries on new books by Ohio authors and on Ohio subjects, and has a readership of 8,000 people per issue
- Research, solicit, process, and catalog 350 to 500 new books each year for the Ohioana Collection, and provide access and service to more than 3,000 users of the collection
- Produce a new Ohio Literary Map and provide 10,000 copies to libraries and students in grades 3-12
- Present the On the Road series of literary events around the state, serving 500 people
- Collaborate with the Ohio Arts Council on the Poetry Out Loud program and the State Library of Ohio on the Choose to Read Ohio program. Annually, these educational programs serve more than 12,000 students statewide.

The greatest challenge Ohioana is facing at present is staffing. During FY2014, due to a retirement and two people leaving for other jobs, Ohioana went from being a staff of four people to a staff of three. Moving in to the new biennium, our most critical internal need is to bring the staff back to four positions. Which is why we requested, and are grateful that the Governor's budget recommendation included, an increase from our current \$140,000 allocation to \$155,000 in FY2016 and \$160,000 in FY2017, which will enable us to hire a Development Assistant. The person in this position will help the Ohioana Board to maximize our state support by leveraging it to raise funds from outside sources.

The 2016-2017 Biennium will see two significant anniversaries for Ohioana: the 10th anniversary of the Ohioana Book Festival in April 2016 and the 75th Anniversary of the Ohioana Awards in October 2016. Our goal is to capitalize on these significant anniversaries and to use them to generate greater visibility and support for Ohioana. This is where the addition of a Development Assistant to the staff will be vitally important.

A special note that while the state's subsidy helps to fund a portion of staff salaries and benefits, members of Ohioana's staff are not state employees. They do not receive state benefits nor are they covered by PERS.

Preserving Ohioana's Identity in the State Budget

We recognize that the proposal in the Ohio House to move the Ohioana Library's operating subsidy to the Ohio History Connection and then to the State Library of Ohio resulted from a desire to streamline government and promote greater economy and efficiency.

However, we would argue that Ohioana has already been a model in responding to Governor Kasich's and the legislature's call to be efficient, creative and innovative as we serve the taxpayers of Ohio:

- Full-time staff has been reduced from six in 2009 to three in 2014
- The State's share of Ohioana's operating budget has gone from 69% in 2007 to 45% in 2014
- We have made judicious reductions where possible without compromising our mission and core programs
- We have expanded our partnerships with agencies and non-profit organizations across the state, enabling us to provide programs and services without additional cost to the taxpayer (see attached list)

Most important, as Ohioana uses its state support to leverage private dollars, we believe our status as a singular entity in the state budget is vital for us to maximize our ability to leverage those dollars.

In essence, the state's support of Ohioana as a unique entity is the "seed funding" that enables Ohioana to generate support from across the state, from major foundations in Cleveland and Columbus to major corporations such as Honda and Huntington Bank.

Summary and Conclusion

We believe that the State of Ohio and the Ohioana Library Association has been a collaboration that has served the people of Ohio well for 85 years. As I said in the opening of this testimony, ours is a model of what a successful private/public partnership can be.

Ohioana directly serve more than 100,000 people. And we serve ALL the people of Ohio as the caretaker of our State's literary heritage.

We hope the General Assembly will agree with the Governor that the Ohioana Library Association is a program worthy of the state's continued support, a modest investment that yields major dividends for Ohio, both in terms of direct service to the people and to enhancing the state's image both here and beyond our borders.

I would like to close with the words of Governor Kasich and Lieutenant Governor Taylor, from their resolution honoring Ohioana's 85th anniversary last October:

"We encourage all Ohioans to join us in recognizing the Ohioana Library Association as one of our state's cultural treasures. We thank you for 85 years of outstanding service to the people of Ohio and for promoting and celebrating Ohio literature, and for collecting and preserving for future generations the rich literary heritage of our State."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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(as of May 10, 2015)

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OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

STAFF

Executive Director – David Weaver, Hilliard
Librarian/Editor – Stephanie Michaels, Worthington
Office Manager – Kathryn Powers, Columbus

OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PROJECT PARTNERS & FUNDERS

The Ohioana Library Association partners with many organizations in presenting its programming, some of whom are also funding partners. The list of these supporters includes:

- The Aldus Society (Ohioana Book Festival)
- American Girl Columbus (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Amerprise (Ohioana Awards)
- Anchor Companies (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Barnes & Noble (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Bricker & Eckler (Ohioana Awards)
- Buckeye Book Fair (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Columbus Landmarks Foundation (On the Road with Ohioana)
- Columbus Metropolitan Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Columbus State Community College (Ohioana Book Festival)
- ECDI – The Economic and Community Development Institute (Ohioana Book Festival)
- E.F. Wildermuth Foundation (Ohioana website and educational programs)
- Experience Columbus (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Greater Columbus Arts Council (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Honda of America, Mfg., Inc. (Sponsor of the Ohioana Book Festival)
- Huntington Bank (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- Kent State University School of Library & Information Science (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Minority Brands Media (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Harry C. Moores Foundation (General operating support)
- Nationwide Children’s Hospital (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Odyssey Press (*Ohioana Quarterly*, Ohioana Awards)
- Ohio Arts Council (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards, Poetry Out Loud)
- Ohio Center for the Book at the Cleveland Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohio Literary Map, Poetry Out Loud)
- Ohio Humanities Council (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio Library Council (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio Department of Travel & Tourism (Ohio Literary Map)
- Ohio Government TV (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- Ohio Magazine (Ohioana Awards, Ohioana Book Festival, On the Road with Ohioana)
- The Ohio State University (Ohioana Awards, Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio Virtual Academy (Ohioana Book Festival)
- PDG Communications (Ohioana Book Festival, On the Road with Ohioana)
- Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur (Ohioana Awards)
- The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohioana Book Festival)
- State Library of Ohio (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Thurber House (Ohioana Book Festival, Poetry Out Loud)
- Toledo-Lucas County Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Valley Vineyards (Ohioana Awards and Ohioana Book Festival)
- Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease (Ohioana Awards)
- E.F. Wildermuth Foundation (General operating support)
- Margaret Wong and Associates (Ohioana Awards, Ohioana Book Festival)
- WCBE (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- WOSU (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- VoiceCorps (Ohioana Book Festival)