

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for reading my written testimony. My name is Lisa Krok, and I am the Adult and Teen Services Manager at Morley Library in Painesville (in the greater Cleveland area). I have earned both Master of Library and Information Science (2014) and Master of Education (2004) degrees. I am also a former teacher, an author, reader, professional reviewer, and a presenter at library conferences at the national and state levels.

I am writing to urge the committee to restore the Public Library Fund to AT LEAST a fixed 1.7% of state revenue (the current amount). Governor DeWine himself proposed 1.75% of the general revenue fund for the PLF. While the Ohio House restored a portion of the cuts they proposed, there is still a \$90.8 million dollar shortage over the next two years.

My experience and education have both given me a solid perspective on the broad benefits public libraries provide to their communities across our State of Ohio. Libraries carry books, certainly – both for entertainment and educational purposes. Libraries also provide FREE use of databases like Gale Courses, Candid (for grant seekers and funders), Chilton (car repairs, etc.), Business Source Premier (research on many topics), NorthStar Digital Literacy, Ancestry.com, Mango (language learning), home improvement, Morningstar (financial), and many more. We also have a community resources page on our website for things like 211/Lifeline, mental health help, Extended Housing, Hospice of Western Reserve, health care, and more. I literally just today helped a man who another patron reported was bathing himself in the restroom sink. I spoke with him to offer Salvation Army for showers, Project Hope shelter, and Extended Housing, and food help to help get him on his feet again and on the road to being independent. Recently we also had a patron back in school to get her nursing degree, who needed help with research and using the computer. She approached me as the manager to let me know how helpful our staff was, and even came back in the next week smiling to say “THANK YOU I RECEIVED AN A ON MY PAPER!” Our team helps patrons with technology every day – their devices, our computers, print/scan/copy/fax machines, etc.

We provide outreach services at local senior living centers, schools, community centers, community events, and homebound services for those in need. My colleague and I were trained last year as “Ohio Dementia Friends Champions” (via Ohio Cognitive Health) and we created Memory Kits to offer our patrons living with dementia/Alzheimer’s and their caregivers, along with a plethora of resources. We also trained a group of new Ohio Dementia Friends to keep it going across the state. In addition to our Memory Kits, our

Library of Things offers drivers ed cones, cake pans for all occasions, hot spots, household tools, craft and maker space equipment (like sewing machine), civics and citizenship toolkit, kitchen equipment, board games, puzzles, large outdoor games, tech equipment, framed art, and more.

We host a wide range of programs for our patrons, including Cell Phone Photography, author visits, many craft programs, local history/genealogy, teen programs like Great Stories Club, Switch n Snacks, Blacklight Painting, and the Kindness Project, where patrons made Valentine's/notes for local senior living spaces and our homebound folks.

Tax forms! How could I forget tax forms! Some years we have AARP provide tax help.

Digital offerings (in addition to the databases) like Libby/OverDrive ebooks and eaudiobooks and Hoopla ebooks, eaudiobooks, music, movies, and magazines. This enables a 24/7 library for folks at their fingertips.

Children's offerings for storytime, early literacy, crafting, learning new skills, and our Summer Reading Program/Winter Reading Program (for all ages) help keep kids engaged and busy, parents happy, and helps avoid the "summer slide" of reading skills while kids aren't in school.

The ROI for public libraries is huge.

<https://growthzonecmsprodeastus.azureedge.net/sites/2039/2024/09/The-Return-on-Investment-of-Ohios-Public-Libraries-and-National-Comparison-08.21.pdf>

I ask you to consider my testimony and restore the Public Library Fund to AT LEAST a fixed 1.7% of state revenue. Thank you again for the opportunity to share my library stories.

Sincerely,

Lisa Krok, MLIS, M.Ed

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