

Written Testimony of Jan Nesor, PhD  
Am. Sub. H. B. No. 96  
State of Ohio  
Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
May 27, 2025

Chairperson Cirino, Vice-Chair Robb Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Finance Committee

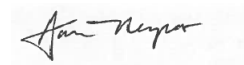
My name is Jan Nesor, and I am a professor of Education Policy at the Ohio State University. I do not represent Ohio State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to certain provisions in Am. Sub. H. B. No. 96, in particular those pertaining to library funding.

While I commend legislators for restoring the Public Library Fund, basing that funding on a direct, line-item GRF appropriation rather than the existing system of a fixed percentage of GRF tax revenue is problematic. It creates uncertainty in budgeting and leaves future funding vulnerable to line item vetos. I write to urge you to restore the Public Library Fund to at least a fixed 1.7% of state revenue (the current amount). This would give stability to the system and allow librarians to plan with confidence.

Libraries play critical educational, economic, and community-enhancing roles.<sup>1</sup> As the writer Susan Orlean observes “The publicness of the public library is an increasingly rare commodity. It becomes harder all the time to think of places that welcome everyone and don’t charge any money for that warm embrace.”<sup>2</sup> They are multigenerational community centers. If you walk into one right now you’ll find them crowded with children participating in summer programs, and with adults from all classes and ethnicities using computers, browsing for books, reading the newspaper, or studying with others. They are a symbol of democracy and national pride. As one writer puts it, “Libraries are the last place in America where you are valued for your personhood, rather than the contents of your wallet. At the library, you are a *patron*, not a customer.”<sup>3</sup>

We need to expand the number of such places, not undermine them with bad funding arrangements. I urge you to restore the 1.7% fixed funding level.

Sincerely,



Jan Nesor

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<sup>1</sup> <https://blog.pressreader.com/libraries-institutions/role-libraries-play-in-economic-development> ; <https://www.lisedunetwork.com/the-economic-and-social-impact-of-libraries-within-their-communities/>

<sup>2</sup> Orlean, S. (2018). *The Library Book*. Simon & Schuster

<sup>3</sup> <https://doctorow.medium.com/they-want-to-kill-libraries-ec045c06097e>