

TALKING POINTS

MESSAGE

- Thank your legislator for his/her past support of public libraries.
- Ask her/him to help develop a budget that includes state funding for libraries equal to this year's (FY 2008-2009) funding. This would require restoring \$4.79 million for state support for library services, including \$2.45 million to restore the devastating cuts to the services provided by the State Library of Pennsylvania.
- Inform her/him that Pennsylvania stands to lose nearly \$1 million in federal money, if the cuts proposed in the Governor's budget stand.
- Remind her/him that public libraries all across Pennsylvania are busier than ever, making this the worst possible time to cut the Public Library Subsidy.

BACKGROUND

Pennsylvanians Demand Library Services

Demand for library service rises dramatically during a recession. Libraries all across Pennsylvania are busier than ever before serving people looking for work, families on tight budgets, and retirees grappling with shrinking savings.

Yet the Governor's budget proposes to cut 2.3% from state support for local libraries or \$1,175,000, even as the Department of Education's \$14 billion budget grows overall.

Library users across the Commonwealth will be affected by the devastating 50% cut in the line item for State Library operations. In addition to providing support for legislators and Pennsylvania government officials, the State Library is the agency that collects and preserves material by and about Pennsylvania, including genealogical and local history information.

Other cuts in the Governor's budget proposal affect important library services such as shared databases (POWER Library), interlibrary loan, and Ask Here PA, the state's virtual reference service.

Pennsylvania's librarians ask not for an increase, but for level funding in order to meet some part of the rising demand for hours, computer access, current books, publications, and DVDs.

Governor Rendell's Proposed Budget Will Cost Pennsylvania \$906,000 in Lost Federal Money

The federal government requires states to maintain their financial support for libraries each year. This "maintenance of effort" requirement means that the Governor's proposal to reduce four library appropriations by \$3,040,000 (including the devastating 50% cut to our State Library) will cause **Pennsylvania to lose nearly a million additional federal dollars.** This loss of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds would come at the very time we're trying to secure every nickel possible from Washington.

Pennsylvanians Need Libraries More Than Ever

Pennsylvanians understand well the impact of this current recession. They experience it every hour of every day. More and more, they look to their libraries to:

1. Provide vital services to unemployed, undertrained and first-time jobseekers. These services include free access to the Internet and electronic resources for jobs, education, and training; information on careers and opportunities; and staff expertise to assist with resumes and applications.
2. Guide students, families, and business people to the latest books and other printed and computer resources as well as DVDs and downloadable books.
3. Offer well-trained, professional staff to meet the informational and educational needs of all library customers.

Maintaining these key constituent services in libraries for FY 2009-10 calls for funding equal to FY 2008-09 levels.