

Talking Points on Sub. HB 96 FY26-27 State Budget Bill Conference Committee

Public Library Fund

- HB 96 reduces actual state funding for public libraries from \$504.59 million in FY25 to \$479.7 million in FY26 and \$489.7 million FY27.
- HB 96 changes the Public Library Fund (PLF) from a percentage of General Revenue Fund (GRF) tax receipts to a line-item appropriation.
- Funds the PLF at \$490 million in FY26 and \$500 million in FY27 through a line-item appropriation instead of a percentage of state tax receipts as proposed by the Governor. The Governor's proposal estimated the PLF at \$531.7 million in FY26 and \$549.1 million in FY27 (1.75% of GRF).
- In addition, the Senate added language to deduct more than \$10.3 million in each fiscal year from the PLF line-item appropriation to fund the following entities: State Library of Ohio, OPLIN, Library for the Blind, Regional Library Systems, and the Ohioana Library Association.
 - State Library of Ohio (\$4,527,036 in FY26 and \$4,527,474 in FY27)
 - OPLIN (\$3,689,788 each FY)
 - Library for the Blind (\$1,274,194 each FY)
 - Regional Library Systems (\$494,000 each FY)
 - Ohioana Library Association (\$310,516 each FY)

Talking Points

- State funding for Ohio's public libraries will be **cut by almost \$25 million on July 1, 2025**.
- Ohio's public libraries have had a partnership with the state to deliver services at the local level for almost 100 years.
- The PLF is reauthorized every two years in the state budget.
- The PLF is an extremely small portion of the state budget and makes up less than 0.5% of the overall budget.
- Usage is growing in Ohio libraries. In 2024, Ohioans visited their local libraries more than 48 million times.
- 19% of Ohio's public library systems rely solely on the PLF for their primary source of funding and DO NOT have a local property tax levy (48 of the 251).
- 51% of the total funding for Ohio's public libraries comes from the state through the PLF.

Urge members of the Conference Committee and Governor DeWine to eliminate the \$10.3 million deduction from the PLF for multiple state agencies/services. These entities should be funded directly from the GRF. Funneling dollars through the PLF for state agencies and other services causes confusion and misrepresents the actual level of funding for Ohio's public libraries.

Share how the cuts will impact your library and the potential loss of local services.

Library Materials

- HB 96 requires public libraries to place material related to sexual orientation or gender identity or expression in a portion of the library that is not primarily open to the view of minors.

Talking Points

- Public libraries already have policies in place to address this issue.
- Libraries do not act “in loco parentis” – we do not act in the place of parents or guardians. Parents and guardians play an important role in what their children are reading.
- The bill language is overly broad and vague.
- Implementing this language would be extremely costly and difficult to manage. Some libraries have millions of volumes in their collection and some have estimated this could require an additional \$3.1 million in expenses for just a single library system. Others have projected at least 6 years for their staff to review the existing materials to ensure compliance and possibly closing off entire sections of the library to individuals under 18.

Urge members of the Conference Committee and Governor DeWine to remove the provisions related to library materials. We feel parents know what is best for their children and consider this an unfunded mandate.

Share how this will impact your library, and the potential costs related to this provision.

County Budget Commission

- Allows a county budget commission to reduce millage on any voter-approved tax levy, aside from a debt levy, if the commission finds it reasonably necessary or prudent to avoid unnecessary, excessive, or unneeded property tax collections.

Talking Points

- Ohio is a local control state. This provision disenfranchises and undermines the rights of local voters.
- In many cases there are public libraries with service area and taxing boundaries in multiple counties. This provision could cause extreme confusion and inconsistent application of levies.

Urge members of the Conference Committee and Governor DeWine to remove the provision allowing County Budget Commissions to undermines the will of local voters.