

## **Talking Points on Sub. HB 96**

### **FY26-27 State Budget Bill – Senate Version**

#### **Public Library Fund**

- Continues to change the Public Library Fund (PLF) from a percentage of General Revenue Fund (GRF) tax receipts to a line-item appropriation.
- Maintains House appropriation line-item at \$490 million in FY26 and \$500 million in FY27 instead of a percentage of state tax receipts as proposed by the Governor. The Governor's proposal estimates \$531.7 million in FY26 and \$549.1 million in FY27 (1.75% of GRF).
- Additionally, the Senate deducts more than \$10.2 million in each fiscal year from the PLF appropriation for the State Library, 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**

- Ohio's public libraries experienced a \$27 million loss in state funding in Calendar Year (CY) 2024 as compared to CY 2023. This resulted in libraries being funded at the same level they were 25 years ago.
- 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 an extremely small portion of the state budget and makes up less than 0.5% of the overall budget.
- The demand for public library services at the local level is growing, usage is increasing, and the rising cost of inflation can no longer be absorbed or ignored. 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.

***Respectfully ask Senators to fund the PLF at the level originally proposed in the Executive Budget: \$531.7 million in FY26 and \$549.1 million in FY27.***

***Encourage Senators to eliminate the \$10.2 million deduction from the PLF for multiple state agencies. These entities should be funded directly from the GRF.***

## **Library Materials**

- Maintains provision for 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 vague and overly broad.
- Implementing this language could be extremely costly and difficult to manage.

***Encourage Senators to remove the provisions related to library materials. We feel parents know what is best for their children and consider this an unfunded mandate.***

## **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.

***Encourage Senators to remove the provision regarding County Budget Commissions as it undermines the will of local voters.***