

Greetings NYLA Members,

We are pleased to provide this information on the recently concluded Legislative Session, and NYLA's successful advocacy activities.

[2014 Legislative Session Wrap-up](#)

FY 2014-15 Budget

Together with library advocates from across New York State, NYLA reversed a proposed \$4M budget cut by Governor Cuomo, and secured a \$5M legislative add during the budget process. Though this represents a smaller across the board percentage increase than education funding, the \$5M represents the largest legislative add in seven years, and an increase in funding over last year. State library aid is still less than what is required in education law, but we are making progress along the path to full funding. The state Library Construction Aid program again received \$14M in funding, and the budget included a \$1.3M offset for those libraries and library systems subject to the MTA Payroll Tax.

NYLA Legislative Priorities

NYLA's legislative priorities are devised by the Legislative Committee and NYLA Council and serve to set NYLA's agenda on advocacy activities.

Library Construction Aid & Matching Provisions

S.6329 Farley / A.8732 Thiele

This bill was NYLA's top non-budget legislative priority. The legislation extends current language that provides for up to a 75/25 state match on qualifying capital projects, beyond the current sunset date of March 2015 to March 2020. If the sunset date is not extended, the matching requirement reverts to 50/50. [This bill passed both houses and has been delivered to the Governor to be signed into law.](#)

Maintenance of Effort Waivers

S.2857-B Farley / A.8852 Thiele

After three years of ongoing efforts, NYLA succeeded in getting this legislation passed by both houses in 2014. Current law provides for a 25% reduction in library aid if local funding for a public library system or central library, in a twelve month period, is less than 95% of the average funding in the two preceding twelve month periods. This forward-looking legislation would allow the SED Commissioner to grant a three year waiver from these provisions in the event of local economic hardship, natural disaster or loss of state formula aid to local governments as outlined in state Finance Law. Current law permits the Commissioner to grant no more than

one waiver in a five year period, for no longer than two consecutive years. [This bill passed both houses and is now waiting to be delivered to the Governor to be signed into law.](#)

Expand Access to Certified School Librarians

S.7922 Farley / A.9699 Thiele

For the first time in seven years, NYLA was able to have a bill mandating school librarians in every elementary and secondary school introduced into both houses of the legislature. This was a huge achievement that took until the last days of the legislative session to attain. This bill served to start the conversation with policymakers that students perform better when they have access to the specialized instruction and education school library media specialists provide. This isn't a perfect bill, and NYLA will continue to work with stakeholders and policymakers to revise the bill, and work for its introduction during the 2015 legislative session. Please click [here](#) for more detailed information on this initiative.

Exempt Public Libraries and Library Systems from the MTA Tax

S.1891-A Martins / A.1661-A Abinanti

NYLA worked to amend this bill during the 2014 legislative session so public library systems were also included in the list of exempt entities, not just public libraries and had been in years past. Though the bill language was included in a legislative budget resolution for the first time, this bill eventually stalled in both houses. NYLA will continue working to have this language included in the state budget.

EDC Study on Economic Benefits of Public Libraries

S.5854 Farley / A.7666-A Kellner

This proposed legislation would require the NYS Economic Development Corporation to conduct a study on the economic impact of public libraries and library systems in New York State. Though this bill did pass the Assembly, it was held in the Senate Education Committee.

Encourage Digital Literacy Education in our Schools

S.2855 Farley / A.8735 Thiele

This legislation sought to amend state Education Law by substituting the term "digital literacy" for the dated term "internet safety." This legislation passed the Senate in the last days of session, but was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

Taxpayer Access to Publicly-Funded Research

S.4050-A Robach / A.180-A Hevesi

This legislation has largely languished since its introduction in 2012 due to strenuous opposition from the publishing industry. For the second consecutive session this bill failed to move out of the committee of origin.

NYLA-monitored Legislation

During the course of a legislative session, NYLA works on other bills as member needs arise or circumstances dictate. Below is a list of bills that fell outside of our legislative priorities that NYLA monitored during the 2014 legislative session.

Creation of Starr Library District

S.7259-A Gipson / A.9847-A Cahill

This bill is the perfect example of how NYLA acts as a force multiplier for libraries and library systems in advocating before the state legislature. Working with the Mid-Hudson Library System, the Starr Library and Senator Gipson's office, NYLA was able to help push this bill through both houses on the very last day of the legislative session, as the final bill the Senate passed for the year. This legislation is waiting to be delivered to the Governor to be signed into law.

Moffat Library Construction Financing

S.7066 Larkin / A. 9459 Skouflis

Brooklyn and Queens Libraries Construction Financing

S.6931-A Golden / A.9241-A Lentol

These bills authorize the above libraries to become eligible for financing through the Dormitory Authority of New York State. [Both pieces of legislation are waiting to be delivered to the Governor to be signed into law.](#)

New York State Comprehensive Information System Act

S.2314 DeFrancisco / A.9470 Nolan

This legislation would authorize the New York State Library to administer a collective purchasing program with the goal of reducing prices for electronic database resources, and to appoint an advisory committee tasked with selecting the electronic information resources available through NYSCIS. Due to its potential widespread impacts, NYLA closely monitored this legislation. It passed the Senate and died in the Assembly Libraries Committee.

Relating to the Queens Library Board of Trustees

S.6893-B Gianaris / A. 9217-B Aubry

This bill restructures the Queens Library's Board of Trustees by permitting unilateral removal of trustees, reduces trustee terms from five years to

three and adopts several conflict of interest provisions relating to senior library staff. [This bill was signed into law by the Governor on 6/26/2014 as Chapter 45 of the Laws of 2014, and took effect immediately.](#)

This [City Journal](#) article provides some background on this issue.

Public Library Chargebacks

S.2003 Carlucci / A.5310 Galef

This bill provides that a school district which levies taxes on behalf of a school district public library may charge back to such public library the portion of any court ordered refund attributable to library purposes. The law was previously unsettled on this point, though OSC opinions had determined the practice beyond the statutory authority of school districts. [This bill passed both houses and is waiting to be delivered to the Governor to be signed into law.](#) **NYLA is working to amend the law to delay the current effective date of January 1, 2015.**

Other upcoming NYLA events & programs:

Teaching Skills for Librarians – a COMPLETELY ONLINE one-credit graduate course in partnership with the College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY

Registration Deadline is August 31, 2014, for complete details – click [here](#).

NYLA Annual Conference with [Keynote Speaker Rich Harwood](#)

November 5-8, 2014

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY

For complete details – click [here](#).

Library Advocacy Day 2015

WEDNESDAY, February 25, 2015

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions or concern.

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