



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

*Melody Drnach, Chair*

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Representative Marvin Abney  
Chairperson, House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

### **Re: House Bill 7335: Relating to State Aid To Libraries**

Dear Chair Abney and Committee Members:

The members of the Library Board of Rhode Island write to you to express our strong support for House Bill 7335 "Relating to State Aid to Libraries."

Libraries provide Rhode Islanders with a wealth of information, resources, learning opportunities, and a place to build community. Library staff see individuals from all walks of life making use of these valuable cultural centers and strive to ensure that they can fulfill their mission by providing all users with a broad range of materials and programs. Funding support is essential to fulfilling this mission.

The critical role of libraries is noted in the Rhode Island Constitution, [Article XII](#), Section 1, which charges the general assembly "to adopt all means which it may deem necessary and proper to secure to the people the advantages and opportunities of education and public library services." Passing H7335 upholds this charge, ensuring that the state's share to support public library services in fiscal year 2025 is twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount appropriated and expended by the city or town in the second preceding fiscal year, as proscribed in [RIGL 29-6-2](#).

Funding at the 25% level, which requires an additional \$380,114, will positively impact public libraries in every city and town in Rhode Island. Without this additional funding, 24 communities will receive less state aid than they did in FY24. State aid is used to support technology and weekend and evening hours at libraries, among other services that benefit families and individuals across the state. It also supports AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center, which provides online resources for online learning, tutoring, and job and career resources for all Rhode Islanders.

We thank the Rhode Island General Assembly for your unwavering commitment to our public libraries and the ongoing support that allows Rhode Island's libraries to flourish by ensuring that our libraries are well-funded and have the necessary resources to remain vibrant places of learning for all. We respectfully request that you support H7335 to continue providing vital services that benefit all of our citizenry.

Respectfully,

***Melody Drnach***

Melody Drnach, Chair