



LEADING THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALL
MICHIGAN LIBRARIES THROUGH ADVOCACY,
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

January 17, 2025

Michigan State House of Representatives
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative,

Congratulations on your victory last November and welcome to Lansing! I'd like to introduce you to the Michigan Library Association and Michigan's 396 public library systems.

Michigan libraries are centers for learning and self-discovery, providing free access to information for all residents. They are community centers, tourist destinations, places to read, places to gather and socialize, places to study, and places to learn – cultural institutions in the heart of every community in Michigan. More than half of all Michiganders have a library card!

If you haven't visited your local library recently, you might be surprised at all they offer. They have books, of course, but they also provide access to music, movies, games, newspapers, and magazines. They offer beautiful and comfortable spaces for community members to gather, fun events, programs for early literacy, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning, as well as high-speed internet, technology, and more.

Michigan's libraries continue to innovate, expand, and evolve to serve the needs of our communities. However, operating a library is costly. Like any business, they must cover expenses such as staff salaries and benefits, building maintenance, utilities, insurance, and equipment, in addition to maintaining the library's collection.

Their funding is primarily local—property tax millage revenues make up approximately 80% of library budgets. Libraries also receive State Aid to Public Libraries (currently \$16,567,700 and distributed per capita) and Constitutionally Protected Penal Fines (approximately \$19M and distributed per county based on county infractions). Although State Aid and Penal Fines each account for about 3% of library funding statewide, they are crucial.

Libraries contribute immeasurably to Michigan communities, helping create thriving and dynamic places where citizens want to live, work, and visit. We would love to share more about the personal and economic impact of libraries in the communities you represent and the importance of state funding and support. Michigan residents love their local libraries, and we hope you do too.

On behalf of the 2,500 members of the Michigan Library Association, we welcome you to Lansing and hope to meet with you to share our passion and commitment to these public cultural institutions. If I can connect you to your public library director, arrange a tour or a coffee hour, or help you participate in March Reading Month, please reach out to me at dmikula@milibraries.org or call (517) 881-1266.

Sincerely,

Deborah E. Mikula
Executive Director, Michigan Library Association