

March 16, 2016

Contact: Gail Madziar, 517-394-2774

Libraries Applaud Michigan Senate for Library Funding Support

LANSING – Michigan Library Association (MLA) commends the Michigan Senate and Senate leadership for recognizing the importance of supporting the funding structure for Michigan’s libraries.

The library community appreciates the Senate’s support of solutions to help keep our libraries adequately funded. Today’s passage of legislation that would enable libraries to choose participation in tax captures validates the voters who go to the polls and overwhelmingly choose to support their libraries by approving a dedicated library millage. Many of these locally dedicated taxes currently are being withheld against the libraries’ choice and in many cases without the voting taxpayer’s knowledge or approval.

In some districts up to 47 percent of the library’s dedicated annual operating budget has been netted by tax capture districts. This new legislation would allow libraries to determine if certain tax captures are the best choice for their libraries.

“We appreciate recognition by the Senate and Senate Finance Committee Chair Jack Brandenburg and encourage the Michigan House of Representatives to follow suit in support of our libraries which are a vital community asset,” said Gail Madziar, MLA executive director.

Libraries are unique in how they are supported and millages are critical to library funding. On average, nearly 80 percent of library funding comes from locally dedicated special library millages. The library community estimates that more than \$8 million per year is lost to tax capture.

These bills are a step toward taxpayer accountability, tax capture transparency and ensure dedicated library millages go to support the voters’ choice.

The 396 Michigan public libraries serve five million library card holders in their communities. Many Michigan residents depend on libraries for Internet access to government web sites, job search and applications, early childhood reading classes, after school programs and small business information and assistance.

The Michigan Library Association (MLA) is Michigan's oldest and largest library association celebrating 125 years of library support. MLA's membership is comprised of more than 1,250 individual and organizational members from public, academic, private and special libraries. Guided by the belief that free and open access to information is the cornerstone of a free society, the Michigan Library Association advocates for libraries and the free access of information on behalf of the state's residents.