Libraries rely on locally dedicated millages for funding. A millage loss could very well close the doors permanently for a library, so alternative dates to re-present their proposal to their community during the calendar year are essential. Additional restrictions to the number of times each year that a millage can be brought before voters are detrimental to libraries. Read MLA's Statement in Opposition to Any Restrictions to Millage Dates by the Michigan Legislature

The most recent modifications to the state's election dates are the 2015 Public Acts 98 -103, which eliminated the February election date. Since 2015, only May, August, and November have remained.

These bills now pass to our Senators for consideration and they need to hear from us now about why it is important to keep three election dates to allow libraries more flexibility in seeking millages. Please contact your Senator today to tell them that libraries need three millage election dates. Ask them to oppose HB 4530-4533 and ANY legislation that limits election dates and hurts a library's ability to seek funding.

Click Take Action to visit the webpage to contact your legislator. We've created a template email for you that you can modify to share your concerns or send as-is. Thank you for taking action to support libraries!

TakE ACtion

MLA Statement in Opposition to Any Restrictions to Millage Dates by the Michigan Legislature

MLA Opposes House Bills 4530-4533 and ANY Legislation restricting election dates.

House Bill 4530, Sponsor: Rep. Julie Calley; House Bill 4531, Sponsor: Rep. Graham Filler; House Bill 4532, Sponsor: Rep. Karen Whitsett; House Bill 4533, Sponsor: Rep. Ranjeev Puri

On average, Michigan Libraries depend on locally dedicated millages for 77% of their funding and this number is increasing nearly 1% each year. At the same time, diminishing property values reduce tax revenues, and DDAs and TIFAs are constantly siphoning their dedicated millages. While millages aren't the sole source of revenues for libraries, none is more important. Everyone is familiar with how property taxes have declined in value and collection in recent years, which obviously has impacted the library's ability to sustain all its operations.

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In Michigan, all federal, state, county, township, city, village and school elections are restricted to three dates each year: May, August, November.

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The law already limits a municipality from going to voters more than 2 times in any calendar year.

While limiting, election dates offered three times each year, continues to provide libraries and other municipal and school bodies flexibility on imposing a new millages or increasing or renewing an existing millage.

House Bills 4530-4533 would amend different acts to remove the May regular election date and move the date of the primary election in Michigan from August to June, limiting a jurisdiction to holding only two elections in a year. The November regular election date would remain unchanged.

MLA opposes any restrictions to reduce the number of election dates for millages each year for libraries by the Michigan legislature. We oppose these changes for the following reasons:

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A millage loss could very well close the doors permanently for a library, so alternative dates to re-present their proposal to their community during the calendar year are essential. Restrictions to the number of times each year that a millage can be brought before voters is already limited. There is no wiggle room if a millage fails, and libraries get only one shot per year.

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If voters can only vote in November, it could potentially take years before any new municipalities could be added within the boundaries of a district library to increase service.

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Prior to voter reforms like “No Reason Absentee Voting” we know that November ballots were huge, packed often with convoluted and confusing ballot proposals and local ballots are often lost in the shuffle placed after lengthy state proposals and causing delays at polling locations and voter frustration.

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Since the Headlee Amendment causes millages to roll back beginning in the year they are authorized, this will cause further erosion of revenue from property taxes as libraries would certainly begin their process years prior to the actual vote.

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Ballot language is complex and requirements for elections could create a problem whereas a library would miss their opportunity to be on the ballot until the next election. If it is limited to only November elections, the library would not have a millage or budget to operate under while waiting.

MLA will continue to watch for bills that would limit elections to less than three times yearly and will call on our MLA Members to stand in opposition if necessary if we see any movement.