



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Makes Support for Libraries a Priority for 2012-2013 Final State Budget

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR March 26, 2012

*Also Sponsors Bills in Senate to Assist Libraries across the State*

**Queens, NY March 26, 2012** -- As budget negotiations between the Senate and Assembly move forward toward the April 1 deadline, **New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens) is making adequate funding for libraries one of his primary objectives as a member of the Joint Senate Conference Committee on Education – the panel convened to negotiate a final legislative budget agreement for school funding, library support and other educational initiatives.

Addabbo, who also serves as a member of the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Select Committee on Libraries, said, “Earlier this month at a meeting of the Select Committee on Libraries, we were fortunate to be addressed by a number of library advocates, including Tom Galante, President & CEO of the Queens Library system. He and other speakers made the point that state funding for libraries has declined significantly over the years, and I believe we must take steps to reverse these losses.” According to Queens Library estimates, this public library system alone has lost \$3.8 million in state funding since 2008.

Addabbo, who co-sponsors several bills to aid libraries, noted that one of his measures (S.4100-A), to give libraries greater access to funding sources, recently was approved by the full Senate. The bill would allow public libraries to compete for \$3 million in grants through the Employment Preparation Program (EPE) in order to provide adult literacy education. This funding is now only earmarked for schools and BOCES programs. “Our libraries are already providing these services, and should be eligible to access this funding pool,” said Addabbo.

Pointing out that libraries throughout the state, and particularly in Queens, have become ever more integral parts of their communities – providing opportunities for education, job outreach services, language programs, access to computer equipment, and many other vital services – Addabbo commented, “I often hold office hours at libraries throughout my Senate district, because our libraries are, indeed, a reflection of our communities at large. Our libraries provide help and outreach to millions of people, and they are truly deserving of state support. They need funding not only to continue providing a wide variety of traditional services, but to expand further into offering more e-books and exploring other technological innovations.”

As it stands now, both the Senate and Assembly budget resolutions approved on March 13 include funding for libraries over and above the amount proposed in Governor Cuomo’s 2012-2013 Executive Budget. It is now up to the Joint Senate Conference Committee on Education, with Addabbo’s participation, to negotiate and recommend a final library funding plan for the coming fiscal year.

In addition to fighting for libraries during the 2012-2013 State Budget talks, Addabbo is also advocating several other pieces of Senate legislation aimed at assisting these vital community institutions. Specifically, Addabbo is also co-sponsoring:

- **S.6079-A**, which would exempt libraries from having to pay the metropolitan commuter transportation mobility tax, also known as the “MTA payroll tax,” which has

already been lifted for public and private schools. “Libraries, like schools, are educational institutions, and deserve equitable treatment with regard to the MTA payroll tax,” said Addabbo. “In addition, eliminating this tax burden will lend an economic helping-hand to libraries that are already underfunded and in need of greater support.”

- **S.5173**, which would enable any Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to enter into contracts with public libraries to provide high-speed telecommunications service the libraries may be unable to afford on their own. “This will help libraries to move forward with plans for e-book technology and other state-of-the-art services for their customers, and allow them to share costs for telecommunications service with BOCES – saving both organizations money,” said Addabbo.

- **S.6479**, which would encourage schools to provide instruction in digital literacy, better preparing their students to use existing and new technology, along with the Internet, to enhance their education. “This legislation would help to supplement and support the efforts of school librarians, who are already attempting to help students develop their digital literacy skills,” Addabbo noted.

“As budget negotiations draw to a conclusion, I am hopeful that we can agree upon an adequate and responsive State funding package for libraries,” said Addabbo. “Following that, I will continue to work throughout the remainder of the session to pass legislation to allow our libraries to grow and improve their programs and services to the public.”

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