



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Building Brighter Communities, Page by Page

PATTY RITCHIE July 21, 2014

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**

Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Where can you get books, learning tools, technology and more, all under one roof? The answer is your library. Each and every year, our local libraries are becoming more significant parts of our local communities, offering families and individuals not only opportunities for learning but also for entertainment, cultural experiences, job-searching tools and so much more.

As a lifelong book lover, as well as a member of the State Senate Select Committee on Libraries, I know how important libraries are to people of all ages. That's why I'm pleased to report that I've been able to secure \$148,000 in special funding to help enhance services at libraries throughout Central and Northern New York. As a result of this support, more than 50 libraries and two library networks will receive the aid they need keep up with demand and improve their offerings and programs for patrons. To view a list of libraries receiving funding, please [click here](#).

The new funding is welcome news to those who frequent local libraries. Earlier this year, the Assembly and Governor proposed millions of dollars in cuts to library funding in the State Budget. In response, I heard from many library fans as well as employees who opposed those reductions. Together, we made our voices heard and increased funding for libraries across the state by \$1 million over last year's budget. This new support also builds upon

\$160,000 in special funding I was able to secure last year for libraries across Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties. Libraries that benefited from this funding used monies to do things such as purchase new books, make upgrades to technology, expand buildings and more.

As the summer rolls on, I encourage you to visit the fantastic libraries that dot our region. There's no shortage of them, as the senate district I represent has one of the highest concentrations of libraries in the state. In addition to offering the latest bestsellers, libraries will also be hosting a wide variety of special programs—especially for students—as the season continues. Whether it's grabbing a book or attending an event, I hope you find a reason to “love your library” this summer!