



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Preserving Public Libraries

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY May 9, 2016



For several years I have been very concerned about the preservation of Brooklyn's public cultural institutions, especially our public libraries.

Decades of underfunding had resulted in seriously deferred maintenance throughout the system. The Board of the Brooklyn Public Library maintained that in order to preserve most of the system it would be necessary to sell some properties to raise the necessary funds. I was upset by some of the proposed sales and the tremendous harm they would cause to the communities they currently serve. Many of our schools no longer maintain libraries of their

own and depend on the BPL resources to supplement, and the children's parents are relieved to have a safe haven for their children while they are working. Newcomers to our country rely on the libraries to learn English, prepare for citizenship, develop new job skills and search for employment. How could we lose libraries when their use was at an all time high?

With this in mind, I have introduced legislation, S5253A. The reforms detailed in this bill will enhance oversight and governance of the institution moving forward by restructuring the board of trustees and its main governing committee, as well as other "best practice" reforms. In addition I am advocating for the development of a strong, reliable funding stream for our public libraries. I hope you will take a moment to review it and let me know your thoughts.

