



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Showing Love For Libraries

PATTY RITCHIE March 15, 2017



Libraries are more than just places to find books—they are centers of learning, culture and entertainment that exist in communities across our state. As the new Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries, I am doing my part to support local libraries and ensure that they can continue to provide the vitally important services countless patrons depend on.

Recently, I had the chance to participate in Library Advocacy Day with members of the New York Library Association, including individuals representing libraries from throughout Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Oswego Counties. The groups were in Albany to discuss support

for libraries in the upcoming state budget, as well as to advocate for legislation that would help strengthen the services offered by libraries across the state.

Libraries are hubs of so many communities across New York State—especially in the region I represent. I am proud to stand with library advocates and speak up in support of increased funding and changes that will help to improve the vitally important services they provide when it comes to learning, job-hunting, culture and so much more. Just recently, the Senate approved its one-house budget, which included \$8 million more in funding over what was originally proposed in the Executive Budget for libraries. In addition, it also included \$15 million over what was originally proposed in the Executive Budget for the Public Library Construction Grant Program. I am hopeful that this increased funding will be made part of the final enacted state budget.

Since 2012, I have served as a member of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries—before being named Chair this year. In this role, I have been proud to fight alongside my colleagues for increased funding for libraries. In fact, the most recent state budget included a \$9 million boost in funding. In addition, I was also pleased to have announced \$137,000 in special funding benefiting 32 libraries in our region, as well as two library networks serving our local communities. This support has helped to fund everything from new technology to important infrastructure upgrades.

New York State is home to more than 7,000 libraries throughout New York State, including more than 50 public libraries in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties—one of the largest concentrations of public libraries in any Senate district in the state. As we continue to work toward a new state spending plan, I will be continuing to advocate for our libraries and the important services they provide to people in communities across the Empire State.

*(Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo with representatives from the North Country Library System and Northern New York Library Network at a meeting held in her Albany office on Library Advocacy Day)*