



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

## Senator Ramos, Assembly Member Aubry, and Community Members denounce Executive Cut to the Langston Hughes Public Library & Cultural Center

JESSICA RAMOS February 27, 2023

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[Full recording of the press conference can be found here](#)

**QUEENS, NY** — On Friday, February 24, 2023, New York State Senator Jessica Ramos will join Assemblymember Jeffrion Aubry and community leaders to protest proposed budget cuts to Langston Hughes Community Library & Cultural Center. Under the governor’s current executive budget proposal, the library’s funding would decrease by \$112,500, zeroing out its line entirely in the state budget.

“The current proposed budget would take over \$20 million from our public library system statewide and make drastic cuts to the Langston Hughes Library, a vital resource in our district. We are coming together to let the governor know that is simply unacceptable. It is upsetting that we are spending Black History Month fighting to protect spaces that honor this incredible legacy in our city,” said **State Senator Jessica Ramos (D, SD-13)**.

“This is an important time for us as budgets are being discussed. The history of LeFrak City and the history of Langston Hughes is deeply tied to our community. It was always more than just a library, it was a place where this community could gather and celebrate Black history. This cut from our Governor, in addition to the cut to Shomburg is quite frankly, unconscionable,” said **Assembly Member & Speaker Pro Tempore Jeffrion Aubry (D, AD-35)**

In total, the Executive Budget presents significant cuts to libraries and cultural education, including decreases of:

- \$20 million in library capital construction
- \$3.5 million in operating support for libraries statewide
- \$375,000 to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which eliminates the state line entirely; and
- \$112,500 for Langston Hughes Community Library, which eliminates the state line entirely

Langston Hughes Community Library & Cultural Center was established in 1969 following efforts by the local residents to honor the rich history of the Black community in Queens. It was named in honor of renowned poet and activist Langston Hughes, a New Yorker who had passed away two years earlier. The state cuts compound an already dire financial situation for New York City's public library network, which is [facing a \\$13 million cut in Mayor Adams' preliminary budget](#).

“Libraries are the lifelines of immigrant communities, and of all communities,” said **Frank Taylor, President of Community Board 3**. “Libraries are a place of learning where anyone can access knowledge about all types and walks of life. They are more than needed in our communities to help our kids or adults who are still learning and evolving as educated human beings. Let’s never go back to the 70s, let’s keep moving forward; be progressive and positive towards education in our communities.”

**Perla Liberato, Deputy District Director for Senator Ramos**, detailed the extent of services and collaboration that happen between the Senator’s office and Langston Hughes Library. “The library has been an important partner as our office has worked to serve the influx of asylum seekers arriving in Queens since the summer. We have organized coat giveaways, cultural celebrations, family reunification and immigration resource fairs and clinics, and more. Langston Hughes is a library, a cultural center, and a resource hub that needs its funding.”

**Richard Egalite**, a recently arrived asylum seeker from Haiti, is a regular at the library. He said, “Defunding this library will not only affect my family but the entire community. People who are just arriving and have stayed in the shelters that are close by depend on the resources and programs that the library offers.”

“Quitarle fondos a esta biblioteca no solo afectará a mi familia sino también a la comunidad entera. Personas que están recién llegando y se han quedado en los shelters que están cerca de aquí depende de los recursos y programas que la biblioteca ofrece día a día”

The Senate and Assembly will reconvene in Albany next week to facilitate the final joint budget hearings and begin presenting their one-house budgets. Senator Ramos and Assemblymember Aubry are determined to restore the funding for Langston Hughes before the budget is finalized on April 1st.

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