



**House Finance Committee
Sub. House Bill 110 Testimony
April 15, 2021**

Good morning, Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and members of the House Finance Committee. My name is Michelle Francis and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Library Council (OLC). Joining me today for testimony is Jay Smith, OLC's Director of Government and Legal Services. The OLC is the statewide association representing Ohio's 251 public library systems (rural, urban, and suburban) and the 8.4 million library cardholders they serve.

The last time we were here to testify on House Bill (HB) 110 was on March 10. Since that time, some questions have come up related to both state and federal funding for Ohio's public libraries. Thank you for the opportunity to return to this committee to clarify and answer those questions.

American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Let me be clear, Ohio's public libraries are *not* receiving \$170 million in federal funding through the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Instead, about \$200 million will go to libraries nationwide through the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Of that amount, the State Library of Ohio will receive an estimated \$4.5 million to divide among university academic libraries, K-12 school libraries and public libraries (OLC members).

Also, even though public libraries are separate political subdivisions in the state of Ohio, we are *not* receiving the billions of dollars that other local government units will be receiving directly through ARP.

State Revenues and the Public Library Fund

Even though state revenues are currently coming in above estimate, funding for Ohio's public libraries will be cut in the current proposal.

- The Public Library Fund percentage will be reduced from 1.7% of the General Revenue Fund (GRF) to 1.66%
- The base of the GRF will be impacted by the proposed income tax cut which will further compound reductions in funding for public libraries.
- The PLF is automatically reduced by \$5 million in each FY to fund the Library for the Blind and the Ohio Public Library Information Network.
- The PLF has not been reduced to 1.66% since FY 2015.
- Since 2008, the PLF has only been reduced to 1.66% in FY 14 & FY15.
- In the past 7 years, only once did the PLF distribution actually meet the estimates from OBM and LSC that were included in the final state budget documents.

- Costs are growing for public libraries. Last year, digital circulation increased 33% and public libraries already pay up to 5 times more for eBooks than traditional consumers.

Now is not the time to be cutting our state funding as public libraries assist in Ohio's recovery efforts. We are urging the Ohio House to maintain the PLF at 1.7% and to hold us harmless from any unintended consequences that may result from tax reform.

We request that you include amendment HC-1695 in the Omnibus and we are more than happy to answer any questions.