

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 050593)

RESOLUTION

Calling on the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Governor Rendell to restore state funding for public libraries to the 2002/2003 level of \$75 million thereby enabling public libraries both in Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania to fully and completely deliver the vast array of vital services they provide to communities throughout the Commonwealth.

WHEREAS, In fiscal year 2002/2003, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provided \$75 million in funds to the state's public libraries that allowed communities throughout the Commonwealth to enjoy and depend upon the educational and social benefits they provide; and

WHEREAS, As part of the 2003/2004 state budget, funding for public libraries was reduced to less than \$48 million and the state budget in 2004/2005 provided \$57.9 million for public libraries, and

WHEREAS, Governor Rendell's budget for the 2005/2006 fiscal year contains a proposed allocation of \$59.362 million for public libraries, an amount which is still \$15.638 million short of the amount public libraries received from the Commonwealth in 2002/2003; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 050593 continued

WHEREAS, Funds from the Commonwealth pay for 15% of the Free Library of Philadelphia's budget and the significant reduction in state funding over the past two years has had a significant and detrimental impact on services; and

WHEREAS, The loss of state funds has resulted in no new purchases of children and adult books, videos, tapes and periodicals from December 2003 to July 2004, and contributed to the loss of 43 staff members, unscheduled and random closings of branches, including the closure of 21 branches on Saturdays, and the conversion of 20 branches to "express" branches, open only 4 hours per day, from 1 – 5 or 2 – 6 in the afternoon, and not staffed by accredited librarians with masters degrees in library science, but by clerks who need only have acquired high school diplomas; and

WHEREAS, Public libraries provide a unique and basic public service for Philadelphia's residents. 41% of Philadelphia households do not have home computers and public libraries are the largest, and in some neighborhoods, the only provider of free access to computers and the internet; and

WHEREAS, Only 22%, or 39 out of 178 public elementary schools, and 44%, or 18 out of 41 middle schools, have professional librarians on staff. Research has found that effective use of library resources is critical to student academic achievement, and for the vast majority of Philadelphia's public school students, public libraries, staffed by professional librarians, are the only source for qualified, professional research assistance; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 050593 continued

WHEREAS, Public libraries play an integral role in preventing joblessness, that often leads to crime, drug use, and unstable neighborhoods, and help ensure that all Philadelphians can enjoy equal access to information, a fundamental requirement for maintaining a healthy and productive democratic society; and

WHEREAS, Even during the years of the Great Depression and World War II, when the fiscal constraints on government were far greater than they are now, every branch of the City's public libraries were open full days, 6 days per week; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That this Council calls upon the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Governor to restore state funding for public libraries to the 2002/2003 level of \$75 million, thereby enabling public libraries both in Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania to fully and completely deliver the vast array of vital services they provide to communities throughout the Commonwealth.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 050593 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the second of June, 2005.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Reynolds Brown for Council President Verna

Sponsored by: Council President Verna, Councilmembers Reynolds Brown, Mariano, Miller, Goode, Tasco, Clarke, Rizzo, Ramos, Krajewski, Blackwell, Kenney, Kelly, O'Neill, DiCicco and Nutter