

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. And thank you for re-establishing the Senate Library Committee.

My name is Kathy Miller. I am the Executive Director of the Rochester Regional Library Council, one of New York's nine "reference and research resources councils" – better known as NY3Rs.

My role, as director of an NY3Rs, is to assist libraries in **maximizing their resources** and to help them **accomplish things together** that would be much more expensive, if not impossible, to do separately.

Daily, libraries are confronted with the crucial task of **providing more with less**;

- providing vital information to more job seekers, more business people, more students, more immigrants, more New Yorkers, and,
- using more costly technology and materials with ever less money.

No individual library can possibly meet all these compelling challenges on its own. The costs would be too great.

The NY3Rs **brings libraries together** in the public, school, college, museum, medical, and research sectors to help meet these challenges.

Communities thrive when they collaborate.

Collaboration: like bringing together college and high school librarians to create a curriculum for information literacy.

Collaboration: like using the expertise of medical librarians and the on-the-ground knowledge of public librarians to provide quality, trustworthy consumer health information resources.

Collaboration: that makes it easy for all libraries – not just school and public libraries, but the over 900 college, medical, museum and research libraries in New York – all libraries, to work together to provide that most basic building block of a free society – information -- to all New Yorkers.

The collaboration and coordination provided by just the NY3Rs – not including our sister school and public library systems -- saves libraries over **\$22 million a year – or \$3.35 for every state dollar invested**.

Those State dollars provide the infrastructure that allows all this to happen.

Yet the decline in State funding over the last years has eroded the ability of all systems to continue with this cooperation and in fact in some cases threatens the very existence of the system itself.

I also am President of the Board of Trustees of my local public library – the Brighton Memorial Library. Our library relies upon the Monroe County Library System for support and services we could not afford to provide on our own. Our internet access, technical support, shared online catalog, online e-resources, shared e-book collections, and delivery vans to connect us with all other libraries – **the wires and tires** -- these are the services most needed by the Brighton library and every library -- and most endangered by state cuts. Because of state funding cuts to library systems, the Monroe County Library System has had to charge back to its member libraries like Brighton, the cost of those wires and tires.

Brighton Memorial Library's cost share increased from \$40,395 in 2011 to \$55,082 in 2012 (36% increase = \$14,687).

We had to pay it, because doing without those wires and tires is not an option – just ask any library user. But how much longer will we be able to pay? Some public libraries are already reducing hours because of this trickle-down effect caused in part by the cuts to state aid to libraries.

The decrease in state funding to libraries is having other unanticipated consequences at the local level. Decreased state aid to libraries has forced MCLS to explore new revenue streams. Beginning in September 2011, there was an increase in overdue fines from \$0.25 to \$0.35/day and an increase in holds fees from \$0.50 to \$1.00.

Those increases in fines and holds are having a negative impact on library use, we are beginning to see. People can't afford the increased fees – they still need the library, but they now have to budget their use.

As a library system director, as a public library trustee, as a library user, I depend upon you to provide adequate State Aid to libraries to support the services we all have come to rely upon. The 4% increase we are asking for -- to match the 4% increase in education funding -- is tiny in terms of the entire state budget, but huge to us. We need your help and I hope we can count on it as we have in the past.

Thank you.