

**TESTIMONY BY PATRICIA A. TUMULTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 1491**

On behalf of the 3400 hundred members of the New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey Library Trustee Association, I offer our complete support for Assembly Resolution 1491 by Assemblyman David Russo to remove municipal and joint libraries from the new levy cap law.

We strongly believe this resolution corrects a serious deficiency with the new municipal levy cap legislation. Expenditures for funding municipal libraries have been exempt from the municipal expenditure cap for over twenty five years. However, the new levy cap law did not include this exemption. This is proving to be a hardship for many municipalities.

Municipal and joint libraries are established by a referendum of the people. Once the referendum is passed, the municipality is required to fund library service at a minimum level. There are only 245 municipalities which are directly impacted by the municipal library law legislation. If a municipality is served by a county library, property owners pay a dedicated library tax which is a separate dedicated tax line on the property bill and, therefore, not include in the new municipal tax levy legislation. This cap legislation creates an undo hardship on those municipalities which have municipal libraries.

It is an uneven playing field for those municipalities which are supporting municipal libraries. I have attended two meetings this week one in Bloomingdale and one in Jamesburg where the municipal councils were discussing eliminating the municipal library because they felt they could not support the library with this new cap legislation. Hundreds of residents attended. They were extremely supportive of the local library and want to find a method of relief for this new burden. We certainly believe meetings like this were an unanticipated consequence of this new legislation.

When I mentioned this resolution as a possible solution to the Jamesburg Council they were extremely eager to get more details. They said this would eliminate their problem.

The New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey League of Municipalities have signed a joint letter supporting this resolution. It is a high priority for both of our organizations. Time, however, is of the essence. It is my understanding that towns which are on a fiscal year budget will be impacted by this new law beginning July 2007. There is no fiscal impact on the state budget. It does, however, provide an acceptable solution to an extremely difficult problem for communities that want to support their municipal public library. We urge your support of this resolution.

