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Budget Requests on Behalf of Colorado Libraries

1 message

RAY COFFEY <ray_coffey@comcast.net>

Wed, Nov 30, 2022 at 10:47 PM

To: "Shannon.bird.house@state.co.us" <Shannon.bird.house@state.co.us>

Dear Representative Bird,

I'm Ray Coffey. I serve on the Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL) Legislative Committee. I also served as a trustee of the library district for Anythink Libraries in Adams County from 2005 when the library district was created to absorb the Adams County Libraries until 2017 when I was term limited. In addition, I am familiar with the JBC and the the State budget process as I worked as a budget analyst for the Colorado Dept. of Health Care Policy and Financing for many years. (I'm retired from that now.)

To get to the point, the CAL Legislative Committee is requesting funding increases for two line items in the Library Programs section of the Department of Education appropriation for FY 23-24.

We are requesting an increase of \$150,000 GF for the Colorado Library Consortium line item. This item helps fund the statewide library courier system that brings material from across Colorado to public, school and academic library customers wherever they live. This is critical to insure individuals have access to the information and ideas they need to be informed even if they live in remote parts of the State. There has not been any increase in funding for this appropriation in over a decade and the costs of providing this service exceeds the appropriation. The excess costs are borne by the libraries that participate in the service which puts an additional burden on many rural libraries that have funding challenges.

We are also requesting \$500,000 GF for the State Grants to Publicly Supported Libraries line item to help all publicly funded libraries in Colorado maintain current collections that support learning and literacy at all ages. The current level of funding for this grant program represents not much more than fifty cents per Colorado resident and in some cases for small rural public and school libraries these grants are a major part of their budgets for new materials for their customers and students.

Libraries are a critical part of our Democracy and a key piece of our social infrastructure - providing spaces where community members can come together to explore ideas, enrich their lives and foster life-long learning.

I understand that there are lots of funding priorities and needs, but these two requests, while relatively modest in size, will have a profound effect on how people in our state are able to stay informed, educated, connected and perhaps be better citizens.

Thank you so much for your time. I know you work on the busiest, most demanding committee in State Government. I'm happy to provide additional information you need or get answers to any questions you might have via email or call/text at 303 506-1731.

Thanks again,

Ray Coffey

