



House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
House Bill 343
Interested Party Written Testimony
Ohio Library Council
January 27, 2016

Good morning, Chairwoman Baker, Vice Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Member Smith and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written interested party testimony on House Bill (HB) 343, legislation that would exempt employment services and employment placement services from Ohio's sales and use tax.

My name is Michelle Francis and I am the Director of Government and Legal Services for the Ohio Library Council (OLC). The testimony I am submitting today is on behalf of the OLC, Ohio's 251 public libraries, and the 8.9 million Ohio library cardholders we serve.

Ohio's public libraries are the cornerstone of their local communities and play a key role in workforce development. We help Ohioans find jobs and provide training courses. For example, libraries are partnering with local businesses to build a stronger workforce by providing library customers the opportunity to learn valuable technical skills in growing fields of employment to achieve workforce optimization. In addition, we are often the only place where people can come for free Internet access to apply for jobs and access government services.

The testimony provided to you today primarily focuses on the fiscal impact of HB 343 on Ohio's public libraries and our citizens.

Our public libraries have received numerous national awards for the level of service we provide to Ohio's taxpayers. A primary reason for our success is the state funding we receive through the Public Library Fund (PLF).

In the FY 16-17 biennial budget bill, HB 64, the General Assembly chose to restore some funding to Ohio's public libraries by increasing the PLF from 1.66% of the state General Revenue to Fund (GRF) to 1.7%. As a result of this change, the Legislative

Service Commission (LSC) estimated a \$10 million increase in the PLF in each fiscal year. According to the LSC fiscal note for HB 343, the PLF could suffer about \$2.3 million in cuts. Therefore, Ohio's public libraries would lose 25% of the funding increase before it is even fully realized.

We have met with both Chairwoman Baker and Vice Chairman Romanchuk, and we are urging the legislature to allow public libraries to fully realize the restoration of some of our funding. If HB 343 is passed and it results in a negative fiscal impact to Ohio's public libraries, we respectfully request that the PLF be held harmless.

Conclusion

In closing, today's libraries are no longer just repositories for books. It's no longer about what we have for people - it's what we do with and for people. Ohio's public libraries want to continue to be strong partners in workforce development. However, cuts in state funding will not help to achieve that goal.

Thank you for your time.