



February 2, 2010

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

During your tenure as governor, you have been a champion for improving the quality of the educational system across the Commonwealth. As you prepare for your 2010-2011 budget release on February 9, we want to remind you of the key role public libraries play in the educational fabric of the communities we serve. We write you today to ask that funding for libraries not only be spared from any additional cuts but look to you to find a way to support an increase in library funding.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Free Library of Philadelphia together serve millions of residents of the Commonwealth annually. People count on the Library for computer and Internet access, job-search assistance, educational programs, books and information as well as free entertainment - especially in hard economic times. Demand for library services has increased dramatically during this recession. Libraries across the Commonwealth are busier than ever serving people looking for work, families on tight budgets, and retirees grappling with shrinking savings.

The budget cuts endured this year (2009-2010) have negatively impacted hours of service, staffing levels, materials purchasing, electronic resources available, and the extent of programming and outreach services. We are very aware of the difficult choices that were required of you and the General Assembly and of their impact on all facets of government spending in order to address the state's fiscal challenges; however, we urge you to remember the importance of libraries as part of your agenda for education.

Our libraries serve our communities every day of the year. We are supporting economic recovery - by contributing to literacy and job readiness, helping small businesses open, creating safe and stable communities, and improving the overall quality of life for our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara K. Mistick'.

Barbara K. Mistick  
President and Director  
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siobhan A. Reardon'.

Siobhan A. Reardon  
President and Director  
Free Library of Philadelphia