

Hello Senator Champion, *Chair of the SCE & Senate Committee Senators,*

Thank you for allowing me to discuss the Vermont Department of Libraries stance on the Statewide Working Group Library Bill last week during the hearing. It certainly can feel like it was weeks ago!

I would like to address the questions Bryn Geffert, Dean of UVM Libraries, asked during the hearing on the bill with the following (*these are not the exact words, but my take on what was asked*):

1. Can the University System/Higher Education contribute more to the state of Vermont?
 - a. *My professional opinion is YES. There are many ways the state of Vermont can work with the University System/Higher Education of the state to examine, promote, create, discuss, or work to start up regarding almost everything. I will include an article from ICMA on ["When a University Partners with local governments in Innovative Ways."](#) . Another example that goes even further on these types of thoughts is from the Rockefeller Institute of Government.. ["State Government Leverage Higher Education In International Engagement."](#)*
2. Can academic libraries across the state move from the periphery toward a new and evolving center, with regards to collaborations with the Department of Libraries, including public and school libraries additionally?
 - a. *This is a great question that can be discussed and reviewed in the Library Working Group Study Bill. There are two representatives that will be part of the working group represented by academic institutions of differing size and geography. I recommend this approach. It is however, connected to the Vermont Library Association for recommendations on which academic libraries are selected.*
3. Will this bill, *while possibly hard to measure*, provide more access/research/awareness of library services and inclusion of various

library voices improve the lives of Vermonters and residents to become more informed/literate citizens?

- a. *Another great question, that might be hard to evaluate, but it can be attempted through the lens of the entire study itself. This study will attempt to examine a variety of services that take place at public libraries. This will allow examiners to understand what services appear across the board to those that are almost non-existent. In having the review, one could think about what a baseline will look like for library services for all Vermonters and residents. The study will look at diversity, inclusion, and equity across libraries along with community programming, outreach, library administration and the relationship/funding by the Department of Libraries to public libraries. Translating that review into showing if this will make more informed citizens will be harder to do, but the study can show areas of access, services for children, youth, adults, and the mature population that may bring conversations about the quality of life for persons living in Vermont.*

Additionally, there is a request by the Department of Libraries to include the two Assistant Librarians into the Working Group Study Bill for the following purposes - The two Assistant State Librarians should be members of the committee because the services that the Vermont Department of Libraries provides in each of their areas are at the heart of the study bill. Receiving this direct feedback will be critical to adjusting services to meet the needs of our public libraries. With the State Librarian acting as chairperson of the Committee, he will be occupied with tasks managing the meeting and having these two subject matter experts at the table would reduce the burden for the State Librarian to cover these myriad services. As a data gathering study it makes sense to have people most involved with the services offered by VTLIB that are intrinsic to the study.

I hope you are working to enjoy yourself during this unique time of Ten hour virtual meetings, the current winter season, and moving forward each day – one step at a time.

Sincerely,

Jason

Jason Broughton, State Librarian / Commissioner of Libraries
Librarian Extraordinaire
Vermont Department of Libraries