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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT:

REDUCE INEQUITABLE PETITION SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES - NY S03594

OWWL Library System urges the New York State Legislature to pass legislation reducing the number of signatures required for libraries to place ballot propositions on municipal ballots.

This bill would align the petition signature requirement for libraries using a municipal ballot approach, as defined in Education Law §259, with a 25-signature requirement for libraries using a school district ballot approach for budget proposals.

In our System, we have several libraries that would benefit from presenting a budget proposition to voters on the municipal ballot. However, the current signature requirements (10% of the number of voters in the last gubernatorial election) are difficult to achieve in small, rural communities.

Providing the tested and effective 25-signature petition process to libraries placing a proposition on a municipal ballot would allow libraries across the state to be in a better position to practice appropriate financial planning, keep up with the basic cost of living increases, provide competitive salaries and benefits, and have the ability to rely on ongoing, sustainable funding.

NY S03594 would amend Education Law to standardize the number of petition signatures required across all types of libraries and all sized communities to ensure all New Yorkers have the opportunity to fund their libraries at the levels appropriate for the needs of that community.

OWWL Library System supports library services and the 42 rural libraries in Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming, and Livingston County in Western New York.

Sincerely,

Ronald Kirsop
Executive Director
OWWL Library System