



You **ARE** making a difference.

We were heartened to hear about the incredible outpouring of support for Ohio public library funding.

On Tuesday, April 8, hundreds of library employees, directors, trustees, and patrons were in Columbus for Library Legislative Day. Legislative Day happens each year and is planned one year in advance. The date for this gathering just happened to fall on the day before the important budget vote in the House. Fortuitous timing.

Governor DeWine spoke, as did several members of the House of Representatives and Senate. Each one commented on the public outpouring of support. One said: “OK. We HEAR you, and we understand EXACTLY what you are asking us to do.”

The PLF, protected by law, is a percentage of the General Revenue Fund of the state. When revenues go up, public libraries get a bit more, and when revenues go down, we get a bit less. Although Governor DeWine's budget did call for the PLF to continue, we were surprised to learn that the House's budget proposal called for an elimination of the PLF, with libraries receiving funding as a line-item appropriation instead. **Changing to a line item in the budget – rather than a percentage – puts Ohio public libraries at risk for future cuts.** In addition, they changed the method of distribution of the funds to the counties, resulting in 93 library systems receiving a reduction by as much as 30%.

Due to the public outcry, and thousands of messages sent to representatives from our area, the House changed the budget bill. They reversed the change in distribution and increased the amount going to libraries, although their numbers still fall \$90.8 million short of the Governor's recommended funding for public libraries over the next two years. They also kept library funding as a line-item appropriation.

It is the personal messages that made the difference in the vote on Wednesday, and personal stories will be the key moving through April, May, and June, when the budget is finally set.

### **What Happens Now?**

The budget now gets passed to the Senate, where they will prepare their budget proposal (April-May), and then it will go to the Conference Committee where members of the House and Senate work to come to an agreement.

Once approved, the budget prepared by the Conference Committee goes back to Governor DeWine, where he will have the power to veto items in the budget. The legislators can override the Governor's vetoes with a three-fifths majority vote. The Governor must sign the budget bill by June 30.