

Re: Library of Virginia Budget Cuts and Closures

Friends,

I know that all of you are concerned about preservation of and access to Virginia's history, particularly as it relates to family history and genealogical research.

The Library of Virginia – the repository of Virginia's history and the primary facility for genealogical research in Virginia - has been hit with draconian budget cuts.

As you are undoubtedly aware by now, Governor McAuliffe's latest round of budget cuts have fallen disproportionately on the Library of Virginia. The Library has been forced to lay off 12 staff, including most of the archival staff who have historically helped researchers, and has been forced to close Saturdays and Mondays, leaving it open to the public only Tuesday – Fridays.

No other state agency has seen layoffs or reduced hours of this kind (no other agency under the Secretary of Education had any layoffs) but the repeated cuts to the Library's budget since 2008 have left it no alternatives.

The Governor and Secretary of Education approved these budget reductions, so are not likely to reverse themselves. Any realistic hope for relief of the Library lies with the General Assembly, and particularly the members of its budget appropriations committees.

Please take the time to send an email to the members of the Senate Finance Committee and House Appropriations Committee (at the email addresses below), and to your own legislators, emphasizing the need to adequately fund the Library and keep it open for researchers.

Your message to legislators can be captioned "Library of Virginia budget cuts" and you may want to mention the following:

- A. Emphasize that closing the Library to the public on Saturdays prevents the average working citizen in Virginia from using its research facilities. If you or friends can only use the Library on a Saturday for research, let the General Assembly know this.
- B. Ask that the Library's budget funding be restored at levels to permit at least its 2000-2008 staffing levels.
  1. In 2008 the Library had 195 full-time and 45 part-time employees. After the most recent cuts, the Library will have 111 full-time and 8 part-time employees. No other state agency has seen anything remotely close to these reductions.
  2. The Library's current funding structure gives it no discretionary funds. The great bulk of state funding received by the Library flows through to local public libraries – and

the Library of Virginia is banned from charging any administrative fees on these funds. The Library's largest expense item is rent (at inflated rates) which it must pay to the Department of General Services, but the Library has been prohibited from reducing its rent payments.

3. The Library has not been fully funded for decades – and as a result there is a massive backlog of public records which are inaccessible to researchers. The estimated “archival backlog” was reduced to 20 years at one point, but is likely over 40 years now. While priority has been given to providing access to recent Governor's records, other public records may be inaccessible for 40 years before they can be processed and made available to the public for research.
  4. The Library is supposed to be the Commonwealth's reference library for research; but its budget cuts have left it with an acquisitions budget for new publications which is far less than many local branch public libraries.
  5. The Library has a national reputation as one of the leading historical research facilities in the country. It consistently ranks as one of the most visited attractions in Richmond, bringing thousands of researchers to Virginia each year to use its facilities. National genealogical conferences in 2007 and 2014, focused on the Library, brought thousands of researchers to Richmond. The state will incur significant losses in tourist revenue by staff cuts and Saturday closures which will effectively prevent such conferences or individual weekend research visits in the future.
- C. Ask that the Library's enabling legislation be amended in Va. Code §42.1-9 to require that the Library be open to the public for research, without charge to any researchers, from 9 to 5 on Saturday and weekdays (except when closure is necessary for special events, state or national holidays or maintenance); and that the duties of the Library in Va. Code §42.1-1 be expanded to expressly include providing services to the public for historical and genealogical research, and include the collection and preservation of private records of historical interest and include local government records, in addition to state public archival and historical materials.

Please send your emails to Committee members as follows:

Senate Finance Committee

<u>Senators</u>	<u>General Geographic Area</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Tommy Norment	Williamsburg/James City Co.	district03@senate.virginia.gov
Emmett Hanger	Augusta/ Staunton/Waynesboro	district24@senate.virginia.gov
Janet Howell	Arlington/Fairfax	district32@senate.virginia.gov
Dick Saslaw	Falls Church/Alexandria	district35@senate.virginia.gov
Louise Lucas	Portsmouth/Emporia	district18@senate.virginia.gov
Steve Newman	Lynchburg/Roanoke Co.	district23@senate.virginia.gov
Frank Ruff	Mecklenburg/Danville	district15@senate.virginia.gov
Frank Wagner	Norfolk/Virginia Beach	district07@senate.virginia.gov
Ryan McDougle	Hanover/Westmoreland	district04@senate.virginia.gov
Jill Vogel	Winchester/Loudoun	district27@senate.virginia.gov
Bill Carrico	Bristol/Galax	district40@senate.virginia.gov
Mark Obenshain	Harrisonburg/Rappahannock	district26@senate.virginia.gov
George Barker	Alexandria/Fairfax	district39@senate.virginia.gov
Siobhan Dunnavant	Henrico	district12@senate.virginia.gov

House Appropriations Committee

<u>House of Delegates Members</u>	<u>General Geographic Area</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Chris Jones	Suffolk	delcjones@house.virginia.gov
Riley Ingram	Hopewell	delringram@house.virginia.gov
Kirk Cox	Colonial Heights	delkcox@house.virginia.gov
Steve Landes	Augusta	dellandes@house.virginia.gov
John O'Bannon	Henrico	deljobannon@house.virginia.gov
Scott Lingamfelter	Prince William	delslingamfelter@house.virginia.gov
Charles Poindexter	Patrick	delcpoindexter@house.virginia.gov
Jimmie Massie	Henrico	deljmassie@house.virginia.gov
Chris Peace	Hanover	delcpeace@house.virginia.gov
Tag Greason	Loudoun	deltgreason@house.virginia.gov
Barry Knight	Virginia Beach	delbknight@house.virginia.gov
Rich Anderson	Prince William	delranderson@house.virginia.gov
Scott Garrett	Lynchburg	delsgarrett@house.virginia.gov
Chris Stolle	Virginia Beach	delcstolle@house.virginia.gov
Nick Rush	Christiansburg	delnrush@house.virginia.gov
Luke Torian	Prince William	delltorian@house.virginia.gov
Daun Hester	Norfolk	deldhester@house.virginia.gov
Mark Sickles	Fairfax	delmsickles@house.virginia.gov
Matthew James	Portsmouth	delmjames@house.virginia.gov
Betsy Carr	Richmond	delbcarr@house.virginia.gov
Delores McQuinn	Richmond	deldmcquinn@house.virginia.gov
Joe Lindsey	Norfolk	deljlindsey@house.virginia.gov

In block form, these addresses are as follows:

district03@senate.virginia.gov; district24@senate.virginia.gov; district32@senate.virginia.gov;  
district35@senate.virginia.gov; district18@senate.virginia.gov; district23@senate.virginia.gov;  
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district39@senate.virginia.gov; district12@senate.virginia.gov; delcjones@house.virginia.gov;  
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delcstolle@house.virginia.gov; delnrush@house.virginia.gov; delltorian@house.virginia.gov;  
deldhester@house.virginia.gov; delmsickles@house.virginia.gov; delmjames@house.virginia.gov;  
delbcarr@house.virginia.gov; deldmcquinn@house.virginia.gov; deljlindsey@house.virginia.gov;  
delgjones@house.virginia.gov; delringram@house.virginia.gov; delkcox@house.virginia.gov

and write your own legislators, if you live in Virginia. If every Virginian interested in local history and genealogy were to email these legislators now (please do not wait until the General Assembly starts in January), this will hopefully help restore access to the Library as Virginia's leading research facility.

Please feel free to pass this email along to your friends, who are genealogists, historical researchers, members of your local historical societies, and member of your lineage societies, and ask them to also write those legislators to help restore funding to the Library of Virginia.

Sincerely,

Peter E. Broadbent, Jr.

Former Chair, Library of Virginia

Former President, Virginia Genealogical Society

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