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Celebrating 20 years of serving the community!

May 29, 2012

Michigan Senate
Committee on Local Government and Elections
Lansing, MI

Dear Honorable Senators:

I am pleased to support HB 5573 / SB 1105 to amend Section 13a of 1947 PA 359 (MCL 42.13a) as proposed by Representative Tony Forlini and Senator Jack Brandenburg. It is my opinion that the proposed changes to this law will not have a negative impact on other public libraries across the state and that they will have a significant positive impact for library services for the residents of Harrison Township. The changes will pave the way for Harrison Township to legally establish its library and thus make it eligible for penal fine disbursements. It seems a particular shame to have \$71,000 of dedicated penal fine money (with an estimated \$20,000 more per year) sitting in escrow for a library that currently relies on volunteers, donations and bake sales to operate.

As one of Harrison Township's neighbors to the west, the Clinton-Macomb Public Library was established in 1992 and relied mainly on penal fine revenues for its beginning. Today we have over 115,000 active members, 350,000 items in our collections and nearly 2 million transactions annually. Your support for the change to this law will give the Harrison Township Public Library access to badly needed, stable funding so that it may have a chance to grow in the future. In fact you will be furthering the vision of our state's founders who mandated in Michigan's 1835 state constitution that penal fines be exclusively provided for establishing and supporting libraries.

I strongly encourage your favorable vote for the proposed amendments to this law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry P. Neal'.

Larry P. Neal
Library Director

cc: Clinton-Macomb Public Library Board of Trustees

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