January 25, 2017

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

NYS State Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Our local libraries are a core component of New York's educational infrastructure, and it is long past time for your Executive Budget to reflect fair and equitable funding for these critical community-based educational resources. State library aid must increase in proportion with proposed increases in education funding in your Executive Budget.

Library funding is about equality and access. Your previous Executive Budgets have consistently failed to provide equitable funding for libraries, which has restricted access to needed services for our most economically vulnerable populations: young women and single mothers, communities of color, seniors, rural New Yorkers, and the working poor. The local public library serves as the primary point of internet access for nearly 33% of African-Americans and Latinos, and for 25% of households making less than $50,000 annually. Library usage is surging statewide, but funding is currently below where it was a decade ago in 2007.

I am asking you to recognize what New York's 10.6M library card holders already know: quality local library services are a core component of our state's educational infrastructure, and failure to adequately fund these services is an equality issue. This year's Executive Budget must include an increase in library aid in proportion to any proposed increase in education funding.

Sincerely,