

**For Immediate Release  
Contact:**

**New Jersey Voters To Decide on Library Construction in November: Passage of Library Construction Act to Provide \$125 million to Local Communities and the State Economy**

Passage of a bond act on the November ballot will translate to significant upgrades to modernize New Jersey libraries, including ensuring they are accessible to persons with disabilities, while also creating new construction jobs across the state. Assemblyman Jamel C. Holley, a primary sponsor of the bill explained, "Libraries have helped to bridge the digital divide by providing patrons with access to computers and the Internet while continuing to provide a wide range of other critical services. Unfortunately, in some communities access is limited by buildings that do not have adequate capacity to support full access for community members. Many libraries throughout New Jersey are not ADA compliant. The Library Construction Bond Act not only addresses the above-mentioned issues, it also has the potential to act as an economic stimulus throughout the State of New Jersey by providing jobs for the building trades, engineering firms, and architects."

New Jersey's public libraries play an invaluable role in the lives of their communities by providing educational, recreational and civic engagement opportunities for all residents. With a wide variety of services and programs, libraries build communities throughout New Jersey. The New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act provides \$125,000,000 for construction and renovation projects throughout the state of New Jersey if the voters approve it on the ballot on November 7. The program will be a 1:1 match of state and local dollars, providing a potential infusion of \$250,000,000 throughout New Jersey.

This legislation was passed with strong bi-partisan support in both the NJ General Assembly and the NJ Senate and was signed into law by Governor Christie in July. It asks that the voters approve the state expenditure of funds with a ballot question on November 7.

A survey conducted by the New Jersey Library Association found that library facilities are: not fully ADA compliant (41.32%); in need of additional square footage (47.93%); in need of interior painting or new flooring (77.59); and in need of electrical upgrades (47.41%). Eighty percent of the respondents are already planning for expansion, renovation or facility improvements in the near future. New Jersey public libraries are continually transforming and adapting their services and programs to meet community needs. Because of the recent economic downturn in New Jersey many libraries were unable to meet the demands for capital improvements to their facilities or technology infrastructure. Many communities are in critical need to upgrade facilities now.

It was determined that it is essential to move forward in fixing these needs than to wait any longer. This bond program is an investment in the future of New Jersey. Although passage of the bond will add a small amount to New Jersey's current long term debt, it is believed that the immediate economic benefits of the program far outweigh the small increase in debt service. It is estimated that the program will cost approximately \$1 dollar a year per New Jersey resident for the next 35 years. The program will generate at least \$250 million in economic development and preliminary estimates are that the benefits will go much higher.

Many statewide groups have joined with the library community to raise the awareness of the critical ballot question. They include: The New Jersey League of Municipalities, New Jersey Association of Counties, the NJ AFL-CIO, the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce, Art Pride NJ, the Southern New Jersey Development Council, and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. Groups are continuing to voice their support for this bond program. Passage of the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act will provide opportunities for libraries to build communities for many years to come-it is an investment in the future.

**For more information see:** <http://njlibrariesbuildcommunities.org>