



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo meets with Queens Library representatives to discuss need for increased library aid in 2018-19 New York State budget

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. March 7, 2018

| ISSUE: **LIBRARIES, LIBRARY FUNDING, 2018-19 BUDGET, ADDABBO**

NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. met recently with a large group of Queens Library representatives in Albany to discuss the need for increased library aid in the 2018-19 New York State Budget, which must be adopted by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

“Every year, hundreds of Queens library advocates travel to the State Capitol to let lawmakers know the importance of our local public library system and other libraries throughout the state,” said Addabbo, the ranking member of the Senate Education Committee and member of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries. “I have pledged to work with my constituents and legislative colleagues to restore this year’s proposed cut in general library aid and in capital construction funding. Our libraries are worth every penny we can invest in them.”

Under the Governor’s proposed Executive Budget, library aid would be cut by \$4 million to \$91.6 million – which basically reflects 2001 funding levels. In addition, the proposal reduces funding for library construction projects by \$10 million, for a total of \$14 million. There is an existing need for \$1.7 billion in library capital funding statewide, with an aging network of facilities where 48 percent are more than 60 years old and 33 percent are more than 30 years old.

Addabbo noted that a recent Siena College poll found that the use of public libraries is up 10 percent statewide. It has increased by 20 percent in households earning less than \$50,000, and libraries are the primary source of Internet access for these low- to middle-income New Yorkers. In 2013, the United States Census reported that 135,000 homes in Queens do not have computers. Twenty-six percent of the borough is without broadband access.

“In addition to its many other vital efforts, the Queens Library is in the forefront of bridging the digital divide in our community,” said Addabbo. “People come to the library to search for jobs, educate themselves, enjoy the wonderful world of books, and otherwise enrich their lives. Our libraries in Queens and throughout the state need our support to continue to thrive and serve children, students, families and others in New York.”

Addabbo, who frequently holds mobile office hours events at Queens Library branches throughout his Senate district, also pointed out the positive impact of libraries on local economies. “It’s estimated that every \$1 invested in state library aid returns \$7 in services to local communities,” he said. “I think that’s an investment we are very wise to make, in Queens and elsewhere.”