

Annual Report 2023

# New York State Senate Standing Committee on Libraries

## Senator Iwen Chu

Chair



**Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins**  
**President Pro Tempore**  
**NYS Senate Majority Leader**



CHAIR  
LIBRARIES

COMMITTEES  
CIVIL SERVICE AND PENSIONS  
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND SMALL BUSINESS  
EDUCATION  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
NYC EDUCATION

NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE



SENATOR IWEN CHU  
17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

ALBANY OFFICE:  
615 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
(518) 455-3401  
FAX (518) 426-6914

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
6605 FORT HAMILTON PKWY.  
BROOKLYN, NY 11219  
(718) 333-0311  
FAX (718) 238-2468

E-MAIL:  
iwenchu@nysenate.gov

December 4, 2023

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Temporary President and Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the Senate's Standing Committee on Libraries for the 2023 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my committee's jurisdiction. The Committee remains committed to serving New York State's library systems, as well as our constituents who utilize and rely on what have become essential community services.

During the 2023 Session, this Committee met one time in Session and reported 10 bills. Out of these 10 bills, seven were chaptered, two passed the Senate, and one was reported to the calendar.

Ranging from grant award funding, digital materials, and the inclusion of specific libraries in the eligibility for funding through the Dormitory Authority, these bills will help make our libraries more accessible to New Yorkers, as well as expand their services.

I thank my colleagues who served on the Committee for their efforts and support of the work that was done in the Committee this year, and I thank you for the continued support from the Majority Conference in the Committee's operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Iwen Chu".

NYS Senator Iwen Chu  
Chair, Committee on Libraries



**2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT**  
**NEW YORK STATE SENATE**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES**

**Senator Iwen Chu, Chair**

**Committee Members**

<b><u>Majority Members</u></b>	<b><u>Minority Members</u></b>
<b>Senator Jabari Brisport</b> <b>Senator John W. Mannion</b> <b>Senator Sean M. Ryan</b> <b>Senator José M. Serrano</b>	<b>Senator Dean Murray, <i>Ranking Member</i></b> <b>Senator James N. Tedisco</b>

**Committee Staff**

Sunju Raybeck – Legislative Director  
Jarred Woodward – Committee Clerk  
Maria Morrissey – Senior Counsel

**Legislative Staff**

Jane Duong – Chief of Staff  
Lenny Markh – Deputy Chief of Staff



## **COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW**

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Libraries has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning public, academic, school and special libraries as well as the administration and funding of libraries and library systems across New York State. The Committee has endeavored to assist libraries in sustaining and upgrading their infrastructure, as well as meeting the challenges of the information age. Libraries have become modern community anchors, playing an integral part in the education and cultural development of New Yorkers.

New York State is home to a total of 72 library systems: 23 public library systems, nine reference and research library systems, and 40 school library systems. There are 755 public libraries statewide. Six of the 40 largest libraries in the United States are in New York, more than any other state. New York's largest library, the New York Public Library, contains over 10 million volumes and is among the top research institutions in the world. Statewide, over 19 million people utilize New York State's public library systems. From the largest library to the smallest community-based book exchange, all of New York's libraries play a vital role in our communities.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, 16 bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, ten were reported from the Committee, two were passed by the Senate, and seven passed in both houses. This work was conducted during one committee meeting. A list of all bills that were reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

## COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the committee in 2023:

S3594 (HARCKHAM): Chapter 587 of 2023. This legislation would permanently reduce the number of petitioners needed to call a vote for annual tax levy propositions to 25 signatures. This would allow librarians to spend their days serving their communities instead of scouting for signatures, while still allowing the question of the library's tax levy to be voted on the ballot.

S5986 (CHU): Chapter 571 of 2023. This bill modernizes our education law to include digital materials in the definition of library materials for the purposes of proper funding.

S6938 (CHU): Chapter 578 of 2023. This bill changes the administration of grant awards for conservation and preservation of library materials from state fiscal years to academic years. By making this change, the administration of grant awards now falls in line with the operations of these comprehensive research libraries and allows these libraries to continue spending this award and simplify their application and reporting.



## TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2023, seven of the ten bills referred to the Standing Committee on Libraries passed both houses of the Legislature. Of these bills, the Governor has signed seven and vetoed zero.

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Action</b>
S3594	<b>HARCKHAM</b>	Sets the number of petitioners necessary to call for a vote on increasing the amount of funding of the annual contribution for the operating budget of a registered public or free association library	<i>Signed, Chap. 587 of 2023</i>
S4069	<b>BORRELLO</b>	Includes the Olean Public Library with libraries eligible for the financing of projects through the dormitory authority	<i>Signed, Chap. 220 of 2023</i>
S4389	<b>ASHBY</b>	Includes the North Greenbush Public Library with libraries eligible for the financing of projects through the dormitory authority	<i>Signed, Chap. 209 of 2023</i>
S5986A	<b>CHU</b>	Relates to digital materials	<i>Signed, Chap. 571 of 2023</i>
S6669	<b>TEDISCO</b>	Relates to the administration and funding of the town of Ballston Community Public Library	<i>Signed, Chap. 336 of 2023</i>
S6813A	<b>OBERACKER</b>	Includes The Community Library in Cobleskill with libraries eligible for the financing of projects through the dormitory authority	<i>Signed, Chap. 229 of 2023</i>
S6938A	<b>CHU</b>	Relates to grant awards for conservation and preservation of library research materials	<i>Signed, Chap. 578 of 2023</i>

## SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Action</b>
S1418	<b>COMRIE</b>	Relates to conducting a study on the access of state public libraries and library systems to capital funding	<i>Passed Senate Only</i>
S3594	<b>HARCKHAM</b>	Sets the number of petitioners necessary to call for a vote on increasing the amount of funding of the annual contribution for the operating budget of a registered public or free association library. Effective	<i>Signed, Chap. 587 of 2023</i>
S4069	<b>BORRELLO</b>	Includes the Olean Public Library with libraries eligible for the financing of projects through the dormitory authority	<i>Signed, Chap. 220 of 2023</i>
S4389	<b>ASHBY</b>	Includes the North Greenbush Public Library with libraries eligible for the financing of projects through the dormitory authority	<i>Signed, Chap. 209 of 2023</i>
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S6669	<b>TEDISCO</b>	Relates to the administration and funding of the town of Ballston Community Public Library	<i>Signed, Chap. 336 of 2023</i>
S6813A	<b>OBERACKER</b>	Includes The Community Library in Cobleskill with libraries eligible for the financing of projects through the dormitory authority	<i>Signed, Chap. 229 of 2023</i>
S6868	<b>CHU</b>	Allows library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks; provides requirements for contracts between libraries and publishers for access to electronic literary material	<i>Reported from Committee</i>

S6938A	<b>CHU</b>	Relates to grant awards for conservation and preservation of library research materials	<i>Signed, Chap. 578 of 2023</i>
S7093	<b>CHU</b>	Relates to project costs for buildings of public libraries located in economically distressed communities	<i>Passed Senate Only</i>











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on Libraries**