

Comment Report

SSB 3131

A bill for an act relating to public libraries, including city and county tax levies for public libraries, and city library board authority and property.

Subcommittee Members: Green-CH, Klimesh, Knox

Date: 02/05/2024

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: Room 217 Conference Room

Name: Dara Schmidt

Comment: I am writing as an Iowan and avid library user to vehemently object to SSB 3131. This is a wildly unnecessary power grab when cities already have the power to appoint library boards. This legislation would have a chilling effect on intellectual freedom and the rights of Iowans to have independent public libraries open to all, regardless of political affiliation or belief. This shocking legislation would be devastating for our communities and I urge you stop this from moving forward.

Name: Molly Cormaney

Comment: Please reconsider this legislation. It is unnecessary and harmful to the autonomy of our public libraries. Public libraries need to remain sources of information for all free from political battles and agendas. We also need to keep our levy funds, so that we can continue to provide valuable public services to every citizen, regardless of their ability to pay for those services. This type of government overreach is highly disturbing, and I beseech you to drop this bill. Many other areas of state government are in need of your time and attention.

Name: Cathy Van Maanen

Comment: Library Boards are made up of dedicated citizens concerned about the rights and intellectual freedoms of our patrons. They are unencumbered by other responsibilities and concentrate on maintaining the best oversight possible for their community's library. Stripping their authority will undermine a library's ability to provide the best resources and services. Please drop this bill and allow elected officials to concentrate on their areas of greatest need, and allow for the successful leadership of Library Trustees to continue.

Name: Karla Duff

Comment: As the Director of Volga Public Library and a lifetime public library user, I am appalled by this bill! Such a drastic measure threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Library operations and services heavily rely on levies as well as volunteer Iowans appointed by elected bodies to represent, serve, and support the mission of their library. Libraries are cornerstones of education, providing free access to information, technology, and cultural enrichment. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. Please stop this bill that only creates a problem when there isn't one to begin with. Karla

Name: Wendy Doyel

Comment: I am vehemently opposed this bill, this bill would undermine over 500 libraries in the state as well as put them in financial jeopardy. The bill's provision to transfer library board assets to the city represents a potential misallocation of resources. Local

library boards are best positioned to allocate funds, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed. Cities who are not a part of library day to day life have no idea what is needed or wanted by the people they serve. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. Libraries need to be kept as they are in order to provide the services that are, by some, desperately needed, and by all desperately wanted.

Name: Teresa Wichtendahl

Comment: It has come to my attention that Bill 3131 would like to do away with our local public library boards and put additional responsibility and strain on our already over worked city councils. I have been a member of our library board here in Adel for over two years now. I live out in the country and we can have only one representative from that area, so I have waited patiently for years to fill this position. It is a privilege, in my opinion, to want to help govern our public librarys responsibilities to our community. I believe all of our members love our library dearly and want to help it be the best that it can be. I dont believe that a city council will truly have the interest, nor time, to go over the ins and outs of running a library. They run the city and it would be ludicrous to believe they want to go into the minutia of running each individual department that they govern over. Thats why we have a library board, to help make those decisions that are important to the running of the library in a timely manner and in a successful way to benefit the community. Please stop Bill 3131 going any further.

Name: Sarah Rosenblum

Comment: I implore you not to move forward with SSB 3131. Iowa's public libraries are part of the backbone of our communities. Iowa was wise so many years ago to set up libraries with governing boards. I have had the privilege of being the Marshalltown Public Library Director for the past 12 years. I work with dedicated Library Board members who give their time, expertise and support to our library. Right now were are helping folks in our community with their rental reimbursement forms, giving them tax forms and a myriad of other tasks. For many of my residents the local library is the only place to get WIFI, use a computer or print out materials. This bill is not needed. Please do not cripple Iowa's public libraries.

Name: Hanna Hubert

Comment: I keep asking myself why someone would propose this change, so I decided to reach out to current and former members of our city council to get an outside opinion. Guess what? They don't want the added responsibility either. Please stop abusing libraries. We just want to help people and share knowledge. Why is that so threatening to the Iowa Legislature? First, they took the right of voters to levy for a tax to support their public library, and now they are taking away the citizens' rights to control their library at all. This is taking the decision of an entire community and putting it into the hands of a few potentially biased individuals that happened to win a local election. I cannot imagine the damage (and lawsuits) this cause could if the wrong people are in charge and abuse this power. Seriously, I've received requests from a city councilman to remove any books regarding people of other race, sexual orientation, and religion, and I am thankful for the system of checks and balances to stop it. Now imagine this without a library board to prevent it from happening and ask yourself why they are really proposing this change to our law.

Name: Jeff Collins

Comment: I moved my family to Iowa two years ago because of the wonderful people and climate here, and in large part because of the value Iowans have long placed on their public libraries. There are more libraries per capita in Iowa than nearly anywhere else in the nation. There are smart, hardworking, and informed people here. However, this legislation could have significant impacts on every Iowans ability to

access critical library services. This legislation could eliminate the required levy of 6 cents for public libraries and instead make that levy optional, which would mean there would be NO required funding for public libraries in the state of Iowa. This legislation would change the way a library board is created or selected, which could take the authority and power of the public library away from the library board. This legislation would make it possible for elected officials to alter a library board by ordinance alone, removing the requirement of a public vote and taking away the will of the people! It is critically important for the intellectual freedom of all Iowans to maintain this separation of elected officials and the operation of their public libraries. This legislation would be devastating to all Iowans, and I urge you to please not move forward with this.

Name: Tena Sunde

Comment: Speaking as an Iowa library director of over 20 years, I can tell you that the proposed SSB 3131 would in no way benefit Iowans or their libraries. We have an established system of cityappointed board members, of financial management in partnership with the city, and of library board composition and charge that reflects the wishes of Iowa voters. The only reason to seek such an overreach of power for city councils would be to set libraries up to be systematically dismantled at the hands of those who would challenge the right to intellectual freedom. I have my doubts that many city councils desire to be brought into any departments decisionmaking to this degree when there are already qualified people appointed to manage these roles. Please do not allow this to move forward. It serves no one, and takes focus away from providing the many essential services that libraries offer to their communities daily.

Name: Heidi Landt

Comment: Please do not move forward with SSB 3131. Public libraries are absolutely necessary for the citizens of Iowa. Many people can't afford computers and internet, and so they turn to the public library. At our library WiFi usage alone has increased 53% from last year. Libraries also provide books, materials, and programs. The overall usage at our library has gone up 20% from last year. People need libraries. Library board members volunteer to be involved in the inner workings of the library and have the best interest of the library and it's patrons at heart. The board members complete training and ongoing continuing education to ensure that the library is meeting the needs of the community. I don't know that the City Council would have the time and inclination to spend the amount of time needed on this one department of the city. The Library Board has always been an asset that allows the City Council to be able to concentrate on other areas of need. Public libraries only seek to help people. Please stop this unnecessary bill from moving forward.

Name: Kristi Sorensen

Comment: As a library director for over 20 years, and a lifelong public library user, I vehemently object to SSB3131. I have a dedicated board who freely give of their time, expertise, and support for our public library. Our community knows the library is here for them to use, regardless of who they are, or what they need. The system we have is working. Please drop this bill and let each library work together with their board to provide the best services possibl for their community.

Name: Martha Herzberg

Comment: Last year the Iowa legislature took away the right of voters to levy for an additional tax to support their local public library. This year, the Iowa legislature want to take away the citizens' rights to control their local public library at all. This legislature would be detrimental to all Iowa libraries, and I urge you to please not move forward with this bill. "When I read about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that American society has found one more way to destroy itself." Isaac Asimov

Name: Jessica Musil

Comment: This bill is an outrageous retaliation by our lawmakers to control public libraries. It is a veiled attempt to undemocratically seize control of libraries with an ulterior motive: allow lawmakers to impose their ideals on an institution that is open to all residents without allowing residents to vote. Im sure that most citizens do not understand how library boards operate the policies in which libraries uphold to protect intellectual freedom and lawmakers will take full advantage of that. As a library professional working closely with a library board for 11 years, I understand firsthand how these volunteers care about their communities. They help guide policies for the library staff to work under. Our teams positively impact children through programs and outreach, connect vulnerable citizens with resources, provide technology access, offer programming and workforce development for adults and seniors, and so much more. If this bill passes, cities have the power to unilaterally defund and remove library access and services based on personal beliefs without appropriate checks and balances. This bill will destroy of public libraries in our state.

Name: Trevor Krug

Comment: The autonomy enjoyed by library boards across the state is what makes our libraries the bastion of free thought that they are. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131, undermines the democratic principles that guide local decisionmaking and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities. Repeated attempts have been made to do away with local autonomy, and several of these attempts have succeeded. We already feel the pain of this kind of legislation, and SSB 3131 is yet another step towards rule by the few over the many. Libraries are cornerstones of education, providing free access to information, technology, and cultural enrichment. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. I am imploring opposition of SSB 3131.

Name: Kelly Shrock

Comment: Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries.

Name: Gina Schlesselman-Tarango

Comment: Local libraries deserve local control and so benefit from local community involvement and dedicated funds. Please reconsider and keep Iowa public libraries excellent!

Name: Amanda Herrick

Comment: Libraries are so much more than books. Libraries are the social hub of the communities. They are the greatest thing for communities. This bill could endanger the future of Libraries.

Name: Jenny Cooper

Comment: I object to SSB 3131. STOP this bill from moving forward. There is no need to take away another public resource that is vital to our state. This legislation is another example of taking away intellectual freedom and the rights of Iowa citizens to vote and support their institutions.

Name: Samantha Jurrens

Comment: Public libraries are too important to local communities to be stripped of their powers and required tax levy as proposed in SSB 3131. This bill is detrimental to all public libraries, but especially those in small towns. Please do not move forward with this bill.

Name: Mary Markwalter

Comment: I am the director of the Mason City Public Library. The changes proposed in SSB3131 will not help the people of Iowa in any way. Defunding and closing public libraries would prevent many Iowans from having access to information, services and materials that enhance the quality of life for everyone. If Mason City did not have a library levy and a library board, it could not operate as the vibrant community hub that it is. The Mason City Public Library annual statistics strongly support this statement. The Mason City Public Library offers over 200000 services units to the public each year. Please do not deprive Iowans of access to information and services that would otherwise not be available to them.

Name: Jane Vereen

Comment: I am of the opinion that bill SSB3131 is a serious threat to intellectual freedom and the future of the independence of Iowa's public libraries. It is an example of government overreach that will hamper the work of volunteer Library Boards across the state, and threaten the financial future of the libraries they serve. This bill if advanced and passed will significantly block the public from participation in the procedures of maintaining a free point of access to technology and access to information. It potentially places power in the hands of those with personal agendas elected to city councils. Library Boards across this state give of their own time to support and administer to their community libraries. Do not advance a bill that appears to add unnecessary burden to local government, libraries , and their ability to provide crucial services and freedom of information. .

Name: Jennifer Lee

Comment: Libraries are essential community resources that play a crucial role in fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. The strength of our libraries lies in the local governance provided by dedicated library boards, whose members understand the unique needs and aspirations of their communities. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131, undermines the democratic principles that guide local decisionmaking and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities.

Name: Lucy Chang

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. Public Library Boards of Trustees provide vital focus, transparency, and representation. This bill would immediately strip Iowans of their library levy dollars, access to appointed board members, and local control over libraries. I urge you to protect our libraries and reject SSB 3131.

Name: Brenda Kremer

Comment: Born and raised in Iowa. One of my fondest memories is getting my OWN library card. My legally blind grandfather walked me to the library in Marshalltown, Iowa (a Carnegie Library by the way) and helped me sign up. Our library system does not need the state government to "fix" our libraries. Do not consider this legislation. This is not an appropriate avenue to pursue. Fix school funding...fix bridges...fix highways...don't FIX libraries!

Name: Deb Lassise

Comment: I oppose SSB3131. Public libraries are a valuable resource, and a crucial part of an educated and engaged community. We should do everything to strengthen our public libraries not work to dismantle them!

Name: Jenelle Kellin

Comment: Libraries are the heart of the community. A place everyone can go and be safe, physically and mentally. They provide books, movies, research help, computers for those many without them, printing and faxing, programs to educate, and so much more. This bill cripples libraries and takes away from the heart of the community.

Name: Rebekah Hosford

Comment: I keep trying to understand how this bill came to be proposed. I see no way in which it benefits anybody. The city does not need the added responsibility of overseeing the library nor do they want it. The City Council/Mayor has entrusted the running of the library to the people they've appointed people who have undergone training so they can better serve the library and its patrons, people who care about access to information and the freedom to read, people who have the time to learn the ins and outs about the history of libraries and the reasons behind library policies. The relationship between the City and Library Boards works perfectly well, and there is no need to fix what isn't broken. This bill will only create problems. It will politicize libraries and create a space that may not feel welcome to all. Because the library is for all no matter their beliefs. Everyone deserves to see themselves on our shelves and in our programming. SSB 3131 also threatens library funding, a continuation of House File 718. Why are we trying to take away the voice of citizens? Library levies were voted on by the citizens of the area. My community voted to levy a tax on the library. Now my voices mean nothing? I urge you to not go forward with SSB 3131. I'd like to end this comment with some library joy, so here are 10 things in no particular order that made the staff at my local library smile: 1. There was a young girl who enjoyed our picture book about Banksy and was looking for more books about them or their art. While they were looking around, I gathered up some of my favorite youth books about art/artists (including the other 2 books by the author who wrote our Banksy book and an art history book that mentions street art) and showed them to her. Her face lit up and she got SUPER excited. It was heartwarming to share my love of art/art history with her and see her get so happy to read the books I found. 2. A few days ago, a family that just moved from California came into the library on a whim. While here, they found homeschooling resources and signed up for a teacher card. What made my day was their enthusiasm to be at the library and that they really seemed to appreciate the services we offer. They told me they were impressed with "whoever" selected the books on our New shelf. 3. A woman came up to the desk today and told us that she really appreciates the effort we put into displaying diverse books. She loves the range of diversity she sees on the shelves. 4. We had a patron compliment the diverse books on display/on the top of the picture book shelves. She asked if people ever complained about them, and that she would stand between them and us. 5. A teen earned a free book by reading five books. She came to the desk a bit confused by what she had won. When I pulled out the cart of books for her to choose from, she was so excited and confused. "I can just keep one of these?!" she kept saying. It really made me smile. 6. I handed a kiddo the book he was looking for and he was so happy to have it, he immediately hugged it to his chest! 7. A mom and a group of tween girls were using the "Welcome to your period" brochure and looking for almost all of the books in it! It made me super happy to see it connecting with patrons and being of use as an information resource. 8. An elderly patron came in for help using his smartphone. We ended up downloading an ornithology app together and he learned to use it to listen to bird calls. His whole face lit up and he gave me a fist bump! I still smile every time I think about that :) 9. I heard a patron get really, really excited about a book featuring marching band romance. It was an infectious happiness! 10. While I was cleaning up the playhouse I heard a couple of moms talking and one said to the other that they were so happy they met each other. They exchanged numbers and were going to get together again so their girls could play together. I love that libraries can foster friendships like this!

Name: Sara Henderson

Comment: Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries.

Name: Carrie Berg

Comment: I am a patron of my local public library and am also a board member. I am strongly opposed to SSB 3131. The City already appoints board members. I see no benefit to the libraries of Iowa with passage of this bill. I only see harm. Public libraries need levies to keep current materials and to run their buildings.

Name: Grace Chamberlain

Comment: I am a lifelong Iowa library user and I oppose SSB 3131. Iowa has one of the longest and most robust histories of support for public libraries in the nation. That legacy will end if SSB 3131 passes. This bill undermines the autonomy of Iowas public libraries, threatens library funding, and strips library boards of their powers. This bill does not benefit Iowans or Iowa communities. Please stop the advancement of this bill.

Name: Lindsay Mack

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131, as it jeopardizes the autonomy of public libraries in Iowa. The proposed legislation would result in the immediate loss of library levy dollars, hindering the crucial services provided to Iowans. Additionally, the removal of appointed board members threatens transparency, local control, and the broader representation necessary for effective library management. This unnecessary power grab undermines intellectual freedom, making it imperative to reconsider and prevent the detrimental impact on our communities.

Name: Michael Wright

Comment: I want to voice my very strong objection to SSB 3131. I see no reason for this bill other than to disempower library boards and open the door to politicizing them through agenda-driven cronyism. I fail to see any benefit to the public in SSB 3131. Nor do I see any benefit for the tens of thousands of Iowans, like me, who rely upon our public libraries. And there is certainly no benefit to the libraries themselves. This is a terrible idea.

Name: Kerry Vande Kieft

Comment: I believe SSB 3131 would be extremely detrimental to public libraries, their patrons, and to the cities who would have to take over the duties of the library board of trustees. Board members work tirelessly to support and promote our library's services. We do it because we believe wholeheartedly in the services our libraries bring to the community, and we selflessly and willingly donate our time and attention to making sure the library is a welcoming place for all. Why would you want to change that? Why would you want to place that administrative burden on city council members who are already overworked?

Name: Matti Smith

Comment: What would this accomplish? The reason you have experts, boards, and committees that are governed by those knowledgeable in the specialized needs of the group they serve is to be able to take the time to understand the needs and specifics of a service/group, avoid mistakes by examining possible pitfalls, and to make informed decisions through thoroughly educating themselves on the topics being discussed. It takes time to do a job well. Adding this burden to an already fully employed city council would result in rush decisions, lack of attention, and likely misuse of funds due to the lack of time they would have to devote to the topic since they are responsible for all of other needs in their cities. Also, the precedent this would set for dissolution of boards in favor of adding to the load to city councils is dangerous not just for libraries but for all the other specialized areas that use boards to assist their city councils in making informed decisions and allocation of assets parks and rec, environmental, transit, building and housing, art centers, museums, etc. Narrowing the power structure to a less specialized governing body is a quick way to make huge mistakes and diminish the effectiveness of resources and funding. City councils simply do not have enough time to devote to these specialized areas that is why

boards exist. I appreciate all city councils do, but this bill will put people who are not required to possess any education or passion for a currently working system with dedicated volunteers in charge. It will overburden a group already tasked with a thousand different things with making decisions for a community system that requires a specialized education to even work in it. Communities should want MORE help for libraries, not to remove willing and passionate people who are devoted enough to take the time needed to educate themselves on the services, constraints, difficulties, finances, day to day operations, needs, and plans of not only their Library, but how their Library functions in their community. Why the need for this power grab for a system that has functioned well for years? Why reduce the help and specialized governance currently in place for these powerful community assets that educate not only the general population but underserved populations for the enrichment of that community? If the goal is a less educated populace, narrowing the educated voices that have a say in governance and removing the resources that help community leadership is great way to start.

Name: Nicole Rhodes

Comment: Why is there energy being wasted on something that is not broken? This is just yet another attempt at a wedge law to make it easier to make sure that the entire community cannot be served, attacking freedoms that should be given to everyone. Library boards are necessary and serve multiple functions.

Name: Matthew Golden

Comment: If there is any movement to remove the power of the libraries to oversee themselves or their ability to receive public funding, I can promise every single person involved will be voted out of office in their next term. Republicans. Stop trying to rule our lives. Keep your politics in YOUR church and out of OUR libraries, schools, and lives. DO NOT TOUCH OUR LIBRARIES!

Name: Ben Johnson

Comment: I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Study Bill 3131, as it poses a significant threat to the autonomy of over 500 public library boards across our great state. As a concerned member of our community, I believe it is crucial to protect the independence of these boards and preserve the vital funding that sustains our libraries and their invaluable services. Public libraries are essential community resources that play a pivotal role in fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. These institutions serve as hubs for knowledge, providing free access to information, technology, and a wide array of educational resources. Libraries are not just repositories of books; they are dynamic spaces that offer a multitude of services, including educational programs, cultural events, and resources for job seekers. SB 3131, however, raises serious concerns about the potential erosion of the autonomy of public library boards. Local library boards are best equipped to understand the unique needs of their communities and make informed decisions regarding funding, resource allocation, and programming. The bill, as it stands, undermines this local decisionmaking process. Furthermore, jeopardizing the autonomy of library boards puts at risk the vital funding that sustains our libraries. These funds are essential for maintaining and expanding library collections, updating technology infrastructure, and supporting the dedicated staff who provide essential services to our community members. Libraries are not just buildings with books; they are the heart of our communities. They provide a safe and inclusive space for individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. By facilitating access to information, libraries empower individuals to pursue education, explore diverse perspectives, and participate actively in civic life. I urge you to carefully reconsider your support for SB 3131 and to champion the autonomy of local library boards. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will consider the best interests of our communities in your decisionmaking process.

Name: Allison Haack

Comment: Local library boards do important work and this bill will strip them of their ability to successfully serve their local communities. Library board assets belong to the library. Our state has many wonderful public libraries, please don't vote for a bill that will cause irreparable harm.

Name: Laurie Hazel

Comment: Please reconsider this legislation. Libraries offer valuable resources to all citizens. Our library board members invest their time and talents to oversee budgets and resources, to promote programs, and respond to the needs of the community. The Library Trustees are advocates for Intellectual Freedom. They provide leadership and commitment to the communities they serve. They understand how vital libraries are to the city and rural patrons they serve. This bill could not only diminish funding for programs, materials and technology, but also diminish the invested leadership and knowledge provided by the Library Trustees.

Name: Wesley Graham

Comment: SSB 3131 is just another step in the political attack on education and intellectual curiosity that we have seen over the last number of years in Iowa. There is absolutely no need or public outcry for such actions. I have proudly served as a member of the Des Moines Public Library Board of Trustees for over a decade. We serve our patrons and the people of Des Moines without political agenda and without bias. Please let us and the other volunteer boards throughout the state continue to provide such services without political interference.

Name: Katie Johnson

Comment: I say NO! to SSB 3131. Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. I am against SSB 3131!! Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. And Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars.

Name: Alyse Hesley

Comment: As a mother and avid library user, I ask you to please reconsider legislation SSB 3131. The library is one of the last places in society people can go and not be expected to spend money. They are vital to education and creating children and adults with a passion for lifelong learning. We are so thankful to have our library and the staff who genuinely care for us and other patrons. Just today my son mentioned how he loves historical fiction and the staff introduced him to The Red Badge of Courage. Please do not implement this and make it more difficult for libraries to serve Iowans.

Name: Katie Johnson

Comment: I say NO! to SSB 3131. Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. I am against SSB 3131!! Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. And Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars.

Name: Alison Robinson

Comment: As a library user and volunteer Library Board of Trustee, please reconsider SSB 3131. Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries.

Name: Alina Borger-Germann

Comment: I've lived, taught, and worked in Iowa since 1995. I am currently raising a family

here. In that time, I have visited, used, and been a member of libraries across our state from Solon to Cedar Rapids, from Grinnell to Tipton, from Iowa City to Davenport. My children consider visiting a local library to be just a regular part of traveling to their football tournaments. Our Iowa public libraries are vibrant, independent, interesting places specifically because each one is governed, curated, supported, and maintained by the particular community in which it's situated. The local flavor and the unique materials in the collections are part of what makes each of these institutions so incredibly valuable. As a result, I VEHEMENTLY OBJECT TO THIS BILL. Public libraries MUST remain independent in order to continue to flourish. This bill needs to die in subcommittee.

Name: Teresa Greenwood

Comment: As a twentyyear library trustee and lifelong library patron, I strongly oppose SSB 3131. This bill undermines the autonomy of Iowa public libraries, threatens funding, and dismantles library board authority. Library boards understand the unique needs of their communities and work tirelessly to support and promote library services. The board members participate in continuing education to ensure the library is meeting the needs of the community. Local library boards know best how to allocate funds; ensuring that resources are directed where most needed. Libraries serve as cornerstones of education, providing free access to information and technology. This bill would inflict unnecessary harm on our libraries, cities, and patrons. Please do not move forward with this bill.

Name: S. Deyoe

Comment: As a lifelong library user, past volunteer, and current employee, I am opposed to this bill. I do not see any benefit to the public for this legislation and only harm for these essential public institutions.

Name: Leanne Reynolds

Comment: I am a proud Iowan in a small, rural community, where the library is the heartbeat of the community for all ages. I am fully AGAINST SSB 3131. Libraries are vital community pillars, fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. The strength of our libraries lies in the dedication of local library boards who truly understand the unique needs and aspirations of their communities. This proposal to strip these boards of their powers not only undermines democratic decisionmaking but also hinders the boards' ability to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities. Libraries are the ones who have the pulse on the community and the people, young and old. This measure seriously threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Library operations heavily rely on levies and the dedication of volunteer Iowans appointed by elected bodies. Libraries, as essential education hubs, may face challenges in providing free access to information, technology, and cultural enrichment if their autonomy is compromised. I am shocked and disappointed that there is a proposal to strip communities of their voices, freedoms, and choices. I would never support taking a peoplefocused system that is thriving and turning it over to a governmentcontrolled entity. NO ONE SSB3131!

Name: Jen Arends

Comment: Please do not pass this bill. Public Libraries have been a part of my family's life and have meant so much to the development of myself and my daughter. We visit every week. In addition, I worked at a library for several years and saw the direct impact libraries have on lowincome families. They provide a public space where people can access books, the internet, and the community. This legislation is both harmful and unnecessary. Who is asking for this???

Name: Ericka Raber

Comment: Please STOP action on this bill. It will result in defunding greatly needed public libraries that benefit thousands of Iowans every day. Library assets should not be

transferred to the city.

Name: Megan Martin

Comment: First the AEAs, now the libraries. Republicans, stop trying to "fix" something that isn't broken and making changes no one asked for in the first place! A quote I saw about this bill sums up my feelings perfectly: "Government can only be for the people when it is of the people and by the people. Let the people library!"

Name: Rene' Donlan

Comment: I am strongly opposed to SSB 3131. We have a wonderful public library in Decorah and I am very concerned SSB 3131 will severely limit services and materials to the people in our community.

Name: Shawna Riggins

Comment: I am reaching out to voice my deep concern about SSB 3131. As a public librarian as well as a parent and community member, I am deeply troubled with the implications of this proposed legislation. I worry that this removes library funding as well the autonomy of Public Library Board Trustees which is vital to independent institutions championing access and education within all Iowa communities. I strongly feel that public libraries are essential to an educated and resourced community, now more than ever, and that this bill seeks to control and limit the scope of access available to our community members. While I am incensed about book banning, I feel that this proposed legislation is even more dangerous than any book banning because it seeks to tear libraries down at their foundation. The Library Bill of Rights, first conceived by an Iowa Librarian, guides library institutions across the country, yet this bill directly disregards all principles of the field. I am saddened and deeply concerned.

Name: Dustin Riggins

Comment: Please reconsider this. As an avid library user, this would put libraries all over the state in jeopardy. As a parent, the library is great place for programming for all people giving us a great free resource. Leave local libraries in charge of themselves. This will hurt people around the state.

Name: Salma Rios

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131 as I believe it will hinder the ways in which public libraries help the public. The library is not only a place where you can get books, but also a place where people can fill out job applications, use designated spaces for community meetings, help with childhood literacy, and be a safe place for people to hang out for a while. In our city, there are groups of children and young adults who come to our library to use the computers and hang out, as well as unhoused individuals. These people may have had a rough upbringing or are down on their luck, and the library is the one place where they feel safe enough to be in. If the library can no longer be that space, then these people will lose the only space that makes them feel safe.

Name: John Henry

Comment: Iowas Libraries serve by providing free and independent access to information and knowledge which flow in the gaps in our education and experience. In this complex and duplicitous society, we need a source on information which is not legislated or restricted by one viewpoint or another. The library serves as a poor mans university which can be tapped by any citizen to expand their understanding and enlightenment. We need to enable this exchange of information and not hobble it.

Name: Claire Matthews

Comment: This bill strips the community of their role in overseeing their public resources. In small towns, this piles work and responsibility of a public instution on already overburdened city managers. By moving Library oversight away from community appointed trustees, this bill guts the power of communities to support their own

wellbeing. Public libraries are community trusts that provide information, citizenship and entertainment. Kill this bill. Let communities decide their own best interests through an invested and informed Library Board of Trustees.

Name: Arlyss Peterson

Comment: Whoa! PLEASE STOP this impending train wreck toward furthering a dystopian society! I view this as another ploy to remove rights from citizens. I'm in small town Iowa in which the library is the BEST amenity available. It is well used by all generations; furthering life long learning, social connectivity, a plethora of valuable resources for the residents. The library director and board work with the city government to provide the best scenario for OUR patrons. SSB3131 would be detrimental to our operations. Let us continue to run our own librarieswe are doing an amazing job so please don't mess with it. Lets focus on feeding hungry children insteadas that IS something that needs improvedso take another look at that.

Name: Luann Rowat

Comment: I am writing as an avid Public Library reader, user, and a citizen of Iowa.Senate Study Bill 3131 should quickly be shut down. Leaving the governing of our Public Libraries to Local City Councils is absurd and unthinkable. TheMembers of City Councils would have absultely no clue or knowledge of Public Libraries,even if they did hold a library card in their wallet.You need to read the Library Bill of Rights which was written by Forrest Spaulding, an Iowan, Director of Des Moines Public Library (now deceased). While not legal/binding, it has been adopted and supported by many publiclibraries across our nation.Our Library Boards of Trustees, have the Power as well as support of Library Staff to successfully carry on our efforts for all citizens, while a certain small group of the public who is pushing back on "new" thoughts regarding what should and should not be in a Public Library collection. Shame on you for wanting to pass a bill that reverts all the success of a working library back to city leaders. Oftentimes the Public Library is the only place that the students and general public can get their hands on reading material that they are wanting to know more about, and would more than likely find it uncomfortable to talk about at home, or even feel safe to approach topics of their choice within the home or elsewhere. A Public Library and it's Board are engaged, have the knowledge of a successful building and it's holdings, collections, staff, programs and events that are open to ALL. Public Libraries inform and inspire the curious. With their support from a Board that has the experience, knowledge, support towards staff and the Public, this group needs to stay in place as an integral part of the community and our neighborhoods. This Bill needs to shut down, not passed, and let the Public Libraries maintain their support to and from the Board of Trustees for the great and good of our citizens.

Name: Peg Gall

Comment: I add my concern about taking even more away from the citizens in Iowa. Our libraries are very important to our communities. They provide so much more than books, places to gather and children to learn.This bill seems to be looking to close our small libraries that struggle for money to remain open. Please let those of us who love our libraries still have them in our small communities.

Name: Rachael Suddarth

Comment: My family and I go to the library multiple times during the week. We go to the library because I want my children to recognize the importance of this public service, to grow up and be active, educated participants in our democracy, and for them to understand the importance of reading and thinking for themselves. SSB 3131 is unacceptable in a democracy. Libraries must stay in the hands of the people because they are the impartial providers of knowledge and not political entities. Defunding libraries is a move to destroy thinking and learning. Libraries are backbones to communities and by allowing temporarily elected officials uncontested control over those who guide the libraries (boards) and all of the materials in the library, you have

a recipe for ignorance and suppression of rights. Libraries are for all. There are a whole lot of books in the library that I will never read, but it doesn't mean I have the right to say no one else can read them. There are a whole lot of books in the library that I don't want my kids to read, so I parent them and don't let them check them out. Intellectual freedom means having access to what you want to read.

Name: Jillian Aschliman

Comment: I am writing in opposition of SSB 3131. Iowa public library trustees are appointed by local elected officials. They dedicate their time, expertise, and passion for bettering their community by supporting lifelong learning, improving services and advocating for resources that benefit all Iowans through their local public library. Trustees undergo regular training to ensure they are following best practices as directed by the State Library, as well as following both state and national laws. All meetings conducted by Trustees are in compliance with open meeting laws and they regularly communicate with elected officials to ensure they are kept up to date on library spending and activities libraries are not operating in a vacuum. The delicate balance between trustees and the cities they serve allow public libraries to uphold intellectual freedom and ensure daytoday operations are not swayed by *any* political lens. This legislation is a thinly veiled attempt at control. Control to restrict access to information that does not align with the ideology of the political majority. Control over local governance. Control over funding to undermine the good work that public libraries and their trustees do for their communities every day. Please do not advance this bill.

Name: Annie Martin

Comment: Please, please, please reconsider this legislation. Myself and my family utilize the library for so many reasons from the children's programs, to leisurely reading, and research and study space when I was getting my nurse practitioner degree! Libraries are vital to a successful community and reflect the community. Libraries need to be supported and free from the influence of any partisanship from elected officials. It is public space for all the public, whoever you are.

Name: Carrissa Stalcup

Comment: As a librarian of a very small library, I can say first hand that our donations spiral downward when the city controls all assets of the library. There is less love for the library when it is perceived as in the control of the government. Taxpayers don't like donating to a city owned library. Let's not even get into the City employee's lack of training in library laws. The library Board is working in the interest of the local people. City Government answers to their authorities above, and will usually be unable to listen to the local people. Typically our small towns are working in the interest of just barely keeping things running making the city more likely to entertain the thought of transferring donated assets from the library funds to other projects when the library board has intentionally taken a few years to save up money for large projects. This bill will do more to defund our libraries simply through association with the city than any intentional removal of funds. Please Vote NO!

Name: Judi Kaut

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. When will enough be enough? Iowa Republicans seem to have an insatiable appetite for power. I'm not sure you understand what will happen if this bill actually passes. I can assure you of one outcome: you will become wildly unpopular across the state. Leave libraries and library boards alone. You are clearly clueless about how either works. Stop meddling. Remember how you love local authority and local knowledge?? If you need a list of actual problems in Iowa, I'm happy to help. It's a really really long list, so get ready.

Name: Sue Woody

Comment: Yet another piece of unnecessary legislation that threatens to undermine the critical work of libraries of all kinds. As the director of the Des Moines Public Library, I feel

fortunate to have the support of a committed Board of Trustees who are dedicated to serving our community. At the same time, we work in diligent cooperation with our incredibly supportive city government who understand and respect the importance of independent governance. Indeed, we are proud that our new Mayor is a former Trustee. Please, let us turn our collective attention to issues that actually make a difference in the lives of Iowa families such as the frighteningly low literacy scores of our students and mental health issues. They deserve better and together we can help.

Name: Julie Finch

Comment: I am against SSB 3131! Libraries are places that bring people and ideas together. A well functioning democracy allows for the free expression of speech and assembly. Libraries are the best places to do that. The average monetary return on investment of one dollar invested in the library is four dollars back or more to the community. Additionally, libraries serve as cooling and warming centers as our weather changes rapidly, and makes sheltering outside impossible for our homeless. Libraries provide hours of wonderful programming for people aged 0 to 100. Libraries provide assistance to jobseekers and provide materials of all sorts to people who want to learn and enrich their lives. This bill does not provide any possible benefit, except to further politicize libraries, which by their very nature are apolitic.

Name: A. Trimble

Comment: Stop SSB 3131. Libraries play an essential role in our communities by providing access to information, internet, gathering spaces, and so much. By taking away our libraries' funding and autonomy, the effects of this bill would be detrimental and it would hurt Iowa's rural communities the most.

Name: Emma Stoffer

Comment: SSB 3131 is an egregious attempt to strip Iowans of their local civic power. Library Boards are composed of local individuals who receive unique training and expertise related to library functions and services. These are individuals who have passion for their public libraries and who demonstrate dedication to their communities through the continued advocacy for these libraries. By stripping Library Boards of their authority, SSB 3131 imperils the future of public libraries as it threatens their autonomy, integrity, and financial stability. Public libraries are essential to their communities as they are places of education, discovery, and connection. Consequently, Library Boards are essential community entities that exist to provide local governance through their understanding of the unique needs and aspirations of those very communities. City councils across the state are not equipped to take on this responsibility, nor should they be expected to; Library Boards, city, and county leaders earnestly collaborate in their commitment to provide the best possible services to their communities. State leaders need to respect the expertise of their fellow governing entities and refrain from imposing unnecessary restrictions on the very people they serve.

Name: Rebecca White

Comment: Libraries are meant for every person. If control is turned over to councils of each city in Iowa, that affects not only the city taxpayer, but county residents as well. County residents in many jurisdictions would no longer have a say in what happens in the libraries they desire to utilize. Not only is this unfair, but it is also discriminatory. Libraries help educate all residents of an area and access and funding should reflect the area served not be limited by a city council. I believe it is a huge disservice to the residents of this state if you pass this bill, especially in its present form.

Name: Nicole Terry

Comment: Libraries are already drastically underfunded at the archaic 6 and cents by our counties. Taking away this requirement will allow counties to take more funds away from libraries, libraries that are serving rural residents. I know for a fact my libraries

heaviest user is a rural homeschooling patron. Why should rural, county residents receive the same level of services that city residents pay 34 times more for? Keep the requirement in and increase the amount required. Libraries are essential community resources that play a crucial role in fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. The strength of our libraries lies in the local governance provided by dedicated library boards, whose members understand the unique needs and aspirations of their communities. These library board members actively use their libraries, advocate for their funding and services, and bring their children to use the amazing resource. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131, undermines local decisionmaking and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities. These trustees know what their libraries need because they are in the building, using the services, and seeing their fellow community members use the library. The same cannot be said about our City Councils, of which most of our Council members do not even have library cards and visit the library once a year on a mandatory citywide tour. They are not in tune to the communities need from its library.

Name: Jill Wehrheim

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. As a former librarian and an avid library user, I am very concerned about this proposal to strip local libraries of autonomy. Libraries provide immensely important services and we need to ensure board members are able to make the best decisions for their communities. Please reconsider SSB 3131.

Name: Cheryl Talbert

Comment: I am writing to let you know that I am opposed to SSB 3131. As a former academic library director (almost 30 years), and current public library director, I do not see any value in this proposed bill. It could decimate library funding, remove local control of the library board of trustees, and put an undue burden on city council members who don't have time or training to manage our libraries. This proposed powergrab to control library budgets and collections is trying to find a solution to a problem that does not exist. My grandpa always said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I think the Iowa Legislature would do well to heed his advice.

Name: Michele Guinn

Comment: I see no benefit to this proposal. It doesn't make sense from a cost or efficiency perspective nor does it add value to the City or Library. The Public Library Board of Trustees provides transparency, focus, and broader representation to the process. Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars with SSB 3131 as well as access to free public service from appointed board members. As a former board member, I know how important this is. This legislative overreach must be stopped so Iowans don't lose the very important local control of their libraries.

Name: Janet Thorson

Comment: Leadership changing from Library Board members to City Council members would destroy our libraries. We have worked hard to make our libraries the best they can be. As a former Library Board Member and as a Library Director, I know the Library Boards do a very good job for all of our patrons and the whole town.

Name: Becky Miller

Comment: I've worked in a public library for 14 years and seen firsthand the dedicated devotion of our volunteer Library Board members and the efforts they bring to undertaking professional development and keeping abreast of library issues and challenges. I am deeply concerned that SSB 3131 will turn the governance of public libraries over to City Councils and Mayors who do not have the time to devote to overseeing the good governance of such vital community institutions. Furthermore, I am worried that the governance of libraries would no longer be in the trusted hands of Library Board members who uphold the democratic principles of intellectual freedom, access, and

privacy. If SSB 3131 is passed and becomes law, it will erode the work of public libraries and the positive impact they make in our communities. This bill would turn Iowas revered public libraries into political piasallowing politicians to determine if libraries are funded, and which freedoms Iowans are allowed to exercise in them. I am horrified by this bill and its implications. I strongly implore you to oppose and prevent the passage of this bill.

Name: Jennifer Delperdang

Comment: I strongly oppose Senate Study Bill 3131. A library board member is an advocate for the library and its mission. Their role includes creating policies for the library, deciding how a budget is spent, responding to community input (and challenges), hiring the library director who ensures that policies are implemented and ensuring that the librarys mission is being accomplished. Library board members need to understand the general role of libraries, but they also need to have an understanding of how their individual library functions and the community that they serve, supporting equality and access for ALL. SSB 3131 takes away the local governance of passionate and dedicated library boards in Iowa committed to the communities they serve and undermines the autonomy for these boards to continue to protect your freedom to read and freely access information. SSB 3131 does not improve the quality of life for any Iowan, or solve any problems. Please do not waste any more time debating the merits of this bill, as there are none. This bill will strip local library boards of their powers, undermining a longcherished and democratic institution.

Name: Bill Carroll

Comment: Please do not further SSB 3131 any further along. Libraries are centers for learning and selfdiscovery and are filled with resources for Iowans of all family types. This bill lays the groundwork for libraries to no longer be able to independently curate materials and collections that provide resources for all Iowans. Removing the authority of Library Boards erodes the ability for public libraries to provide materials independent of partisan beliefs and threatens intellectual freedom for all Iowans.

Name: Ellen Yee

Comment: Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries.

Name: Carmen Golay

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB3131. Libraries are essential community resources that play a crucial role in fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. The strength of our libraries lies in the local governance provided by dedicated library boards, whose members understand the unique needs and aspirations of their communities. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131, undermines the democratic principles that guide local decisionmaking and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities. This would especially harm rural and smalltown libraries whose resident depend on them as a multifaceted community resource.

Name: Tim Hickman

Comment: Iowa has a long and proud tradition of protecting the intellectual freedom of our citizens and the independence of our libraries. As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Des Moines Library system, I strongly object to SSB 3131, as it proposes to make access to information through our free public libraries subject to the whims of local politicians. Libraries are not institutions designed to indoctrinate our citizens in any school of thought or political party. They are intended to support our freedom and allow each citizen free access to information. As Dwight D. Eisenhower stated, The libraries of America are and must ever remain the home of free and inquiring

minds. To them, our citizens of all ages and races, of all creeds and persuasions must be able to turn with clear confidence that there they can freely seek the whole truth, unvarnished by fashion and uncompromised by expediency.

Name: Joseph LeValley

Comment: As a lifelong Iowan, an avid reader, an author, and a parent and grandparent, I am writing to express my horror regarding, my disappointment in, and my strong opposition to the bill that has been introduced regarding the governance, oversight, and funding of Iowa's public libraries. The library is a vital, essential resource for information, education, and entertainment for all Iowans. The ability of local library boards to oversee and administer those resources is essential to ensure the libraries are reflective of their communities' interests and needs. Public Library trustees provide focus, transparency, and broad representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans would immediately lose their library levy dollars, and will lose the assurance that these free public services are provided from locally appointed board members. In short, Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach now.

Name: David Timmer

Comment: I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed SSB 3131, which would alter the state code regarding funding and governance of public libraries in ways that are designed to weaken the independence of library boards. The City of Pella, where I live, has recently voted down a resolution to make similar changes in its library ordinance. This vote came after a long campaign, with ample public debate. One might almost think that the intent of SSB 3131 is to overturn the will of the voters of Pella, as expressed last fall in defeating the library resolution! Changes to the funding and governance of public libraries should not be made casually, or by fiat of a city council. These issues have serious implications for freedom of expression and public access to information. In addition, library board members receive ongoing training in dealing with these issues that city council members normally do not have. The insulation of public libraries from the winds of political controversy (which can, of course, blow both ways!) is an important best practice in library management, a principle that would be seriously compromised by this bill. I hope that you will join me in opposing this bill.

Name: Caitlin Lauritzen

Comment: Public Libraries are essential for Iowans. They provide Iowans with access to information, books, internet service, printing, faxing, tax forms, the ability to apply for jobs and special programs and activities for all ages. They remain one of the few spaces still available to all, regardless of a person's background or economic status. This is in huge part thanks to the hard work of library boards and the funds that tax levies provide. Moreover, city councils are not equipped to handle this additional responsibility nor should they have to. It can be left in the hands of the individuals with the training and dedication chosen to be on the library board. I am vehemently opposed to SSB 3131 and its undermining of library boards and the crucial importance of libraries to ALL Iowa citizens. It is imperative that you do not move forward with this detrimental bill.

Name: Paul Melde

Comment: With SSB 3131, Iowans will simply lose. We'll immediately lose library levy dollars, we will lose access to free public service from appointed board members, and we will lose local control of our public libraries these are our public knowledge utilities. Please stop this legislative overreach and reject this proposed bill.

Name: Alexandra Reiling

Comment: I am writing to oppose SSB 3131. This bill jeopardizes library funding by eliminating the required library levy, putting every library in Iowa at risk whether its in a big city or small town. It removes the voice of the public by making it possible

for elected officials without any library training to alter a library board and even eliminate it. This would mean that decisions about the library's collections, programs, and policies could end up being made by politicians rather than the voice of the people, posing a threat to intellectual freedom and access to information. Please do not advance this bill.

Name: Adrienne Denniger-Ruiter

Comment: SSB 3131 is an act that would be detrimental to Iowa libraries. Please protect our libraries! The library is a most valued asset in any community. The resources offered are invaluable. Do not take away the much needed funding and do not transfer authority over the governing of these libraries. This bill is unnecessary!

Name: Diane Eddie

Comment: I oppose SSB3131. I have been an active library user my entire life. Libraries provide so much for the community. Not just as a resource for books, but summer reading programs, WiFi access for those who don't have it, online programs like Libby, and a ton of other programs that keep community members engaged. I also believe that library boards are essential to keeping libraries well run as board members provide focus to maintain the high standards we have in Iowa.

Name: Eileen Lewis

Comment: What is going on with the Iowa legislature? Why are you trying to dismantle everything education related in this state? First AEA, and now this attack upon the libraries of the state. Libraries perform a vital function in this state, and in this world. They give us abilities to learn, and to interact with other people, cultures, and nations. There are so many things that children learn through the library that they can't learn anywhere else. There is no parent or grandparent could afford to buy the number of books that their children read from the library. To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark. Victor Hugo We must fan that spark into a forest fire to keep our children informed. After my husband died in 2002, if it weren't for the library in Des Moines, and now in Cambridge, I don't know what I would've done. I borrowed 7 to 10 books every week and read them all every week. I learned new crafts, I learned new hobbies, I read many biographies of people that I never even heard of when I was in school. I worry about the Cambridge library, especially because the city is over \$4 million in debt, and they will take every cent of that library budget and probably close the library for good. Our library has afterschool services to children, and our library has summer programs for our children, and without this essential piece of our community, our children are not be as fully educated as they should be.

Name: Vicki Rossow

Comment: I object to SSB 3131. This is unnecessary when cities already have the power to appoint library boards. This legislation would effect our rights to have independent public libraries open to all, regardless of political affiliation or beliefs. This legislation would be detrimental to our communities and I implore you to vote no!

Name: Ashley Osborn

Comment: I am extremely concerned about SSB 3131. Libraries are the heart of our communities, and this bill would undermine the 500+ libraries in our state. I am an avid library user who has many fond memories of libraries, especially during my childhood. My mom, a stay-at-home parent, would take my brother and I to the library multiple times a week. It was the one place I could escape to, dream, create, and learn. Now, I take my family members to libraries and show them what wonderful resources they are to our community. Libraries are essential third places governed by local, dedicated citizens who want to help communities thrive. Let the Boards of Trustees continue their successful governance and leadership. This legislation would be devastating to so many libraries and so many Iowans who rely on library services

and programming. Please stop this unnecessary bill from moving forward.

Name: Tyler Hahn

Comment: I write to express my formal opposition to Senate Bill 3131, a legislative proposal that, if enacted, could have significant ramifications for the cherished institutions that constitute the backbone of our small and rural communitiesour local libraries. Raised in a small town myself, I am acutely aware of the pivotal role libraries play in shaping the intellectual and communal fabric of such communities. These invaluable institutions are not merely repositories of knowledge but serve as vital hubs fostering education, community engagement, and a sense of continuity, particularly in areas that have experienced the loss of schools and businesses on Main Street. Please, keep one of the prides of our great state standing as they currently are and instead focus on legislation which enhances the lives and communities of small and rural Iowa.

Name: Kristin Mast

Comment: I object to SSB 3131. STOP this bill from moving forward. There is no need to take away another public resource that is vital to our state. This legislation is another example of taking away intellectual freedom and the rights of Iowa citizens to vote and support their institutions.

Name: Laura Blaker

Comment: SSB 3131 threatens the effectiveness and existence of public libraries. It would release cities and counties of the need to support public libraries for their residents. Stable sources of funding would no longer exist, and many of our libraries would lose the ability to provide valuable services and resources to the public. Inevitably, it will force closures of many public libraries, one of the greatest democratic institutions our country has seen. In addition, providing elected officials the ability to do away with library boards without requiring a public vote takes power out of the hands of the people and places it in the hands of a few. There are many benefits to governance by a group of invested community members. They steer our libraries with knowledge and passion, and we would lose the insight and dedication of these valuable volunteers with implementation of SSB 3131. As a public library director of more than two decades, I can link the greatest contributions our library has made in the community back to the dedication of our library board and stable funding sources. This bill undermines the capacity of public libraries to do what they are so good at...education, community engagement, nurturing a love for reading among our youngest residents, exposure to arts and culture, and providing a safe and neutral space needed by young and old alike.

Name: Lisa Leuck

Comment: I left my position as a Library Director in October of this year after almost 18 years of service. The reason for my leaving a position that I loved and cherished, a job that was never just a job but a devotion and a passion, a position that was one of the cornerstones of our small community was all because of the politics you are forcing with this bill. The library board that I served is made up of NINE people in a community of 684 who volunteer their time and energy to support a place of lifelong learning for everyone in the community. They work tirelessly for equity, community, and freedom for all. I left the library work that I loved so dearly because the community's city council was constantly trying to take away the "power" of the library board and harassing me as their director. It is clear that they have an agenda in the community, and a bill such as this one will be their dream come true. They will appropriate funds that were bequeathed for library use, they will appoint library board members who do not have the library's best interests in mind, and they will hire staff (if they can find them) that will push their agenda into a space that has been a refuge and cornerstone for many decades. Sometimes it is difficult to see the problems that may arise from an action. A bill such as this may look like something

that could make things equal and autonomous within cities. But the reason that cities have a library board is this: the library is NOT a political place. It is a place for everyone. America was built with oversight, and that has set it apart as a nation. The library board is the absolutely essential oversight of the city council. As a director, I made sure that ALL patrons, not just those of my political persuasion, were helped, valued, and educated in the way they chose. I give you a challenge to ask those in Elgin if there is a group or individual who ever felt that they did not receive the most kind, inclusive, and educated service possible when they visited their 5 star library. This is all because we have a library board who oversees the politics that might jeopardize the freedom and inclusiveness that is absolutely essential in library service. Passing a bill affects thousands of people, and this one will kill hundreds of libraries and the reading and culture that takes place there. Please do not move forward with this bill that will hurt so many. I am no longer a dedicated director in a town I used to love because of ideas such as this. This bill will be the end for many people's journey in reading, education, culture, and freedom.

Name: Ashley Burns

Comment: Local libraries are governed by local control for a reason. Wellrun libraries are what makes the communities they reside in strong. Not only do our libraries deserve a governing body whose sole responsibility it is to act in the best interests of the library. Our city council members already have so much on their plates and our libraries deserve our full attention.

Name: Jena Schoenhofer

Comment: I am vehemently opposed this bill. Libraries hold an irreplaceable role in our communities. They are the only true keepers of free, accessible resources our communities need to thrive. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. Libraries need to be kept as they are in order to provide the services that are, by some, desperately needed, and by all desperately wanted.

Name: Danielle Oakes

Comment: Please let our public libraries be. They are some of the most amazing places to exist in our world. Think of how many public library books and services you have personally used in your life. They wouldn't have been there without public library boards. Don't take away their power. Let them be.

Name: Luellen Phelps

Comment: I am firmly against SSB 3131, because it weakens libraries in so many ways. Please remember that an Iowa librarian wrote the Library Bill of Rights in 1938 when book banning was a threat. Do not dishonor a state which was once extremely proud of her libraries and all they stood for. Libraries are a great example of American freedom: the freedom to read. I work in a library and am amazed that even in this day and age people walk in the door and are so happy and grateful that this service is free to them. What would they think if they knew their state was trying to take large amounts of money and support away from libraries and their boards?

Name: Chris Nebons

Comment: This bill is a terrible idea. Who is asking for this? Does the city Council even want to run libraries? Our libraries are centers of intellectual freedom, contain nearly unlimited resources, they educate our communities, are cultural and community hubs and you have the bright idea to make them optional and under city council control? This bill deserves to be read and then immediately ridiculed and thrown away as an example of an awful, ill conceived, out of touch.

Name: Douglas Reiling

Comment: On the face of it, this bill creates even more government interference in existing

private library boards and paves the way for potentially inappropriate seizure of property. Those currently in control of the legislature should know better than to push this kind of biggovernment overreach. I can only conclude that this must be part of a longerterm plan to cut funding for public libraries, ostensibly to fund additional tax relief. As both a library user and taxpayer, I can assure you this is not the right place to find more money for tax cuts. Moreover, I seriously question the wisdom of inserting elected officials any further into the running of public libraries. If you can't imagine the unintended consequences, look no further than the legal battle currently being funded by taxpayers to ban books from public school libraries. With the independence of library boards gone, how long do you suppose it will be before some politician starts an equally misguided effort to ban books from public libraries?

Name: Carol Horner

Comment: We have real issues in our state and you keep focusing on stuff that is not an issue. Libraries are working perfectly well the way they are. Make government small again.

Name: Allie Thomas

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131. This bill undermines Iowas libraries and will not benefit Iowans. Please stop the advancement of this bill.

Name: Sam Helmick

Comment: Iowans before us valued literacy and learning which is why they structured in Iowa code for libraries to have secured funding and focused oversight with appointed boards. Iowans before us understood how robust public libraries contribute to economic development, educational and entrepreneurial success, life satisfaction, and civic engagement. Iowans before us understood why the legal liabilities, complex policies, and specialized training inherent to First Amendment services require specific and robust management to successfully and sustainably steward collections, programs, and spaces openly and freely used by the public. This law will close libraries. Those who vote in favor of this bill knows that already as it is blatantly obvious and undeniably true. Those who vote in favor of this bill disregard the wisdom of Iowans who came before us. They flout the Iowan who wrote the Library Bill of Rights eightyfive years ago before it became the international standard of free people reading freely. They deny the principle of free information access to all and refuse to let other Iowans resource their values through ratified code or local levy. Those who vote in favor of this bill will be remembered by the impacted communities and by history for what they have done.

Name: Dona Cowman

Comment: This bill is a terrible idea. Please let the local library be run by the volunteers that are doing an excellent job of meeting the publics needs. This appears to be an attempt to allocate library funds for other projects. Libraries were established to enhance the lives of our citizens and educate our children. Let the library be run by the people that use it!

Name: Donna Peitz

Comment: Please do not move SSB3131 forward . Iowa public libraries are an integral part of our community. I am an avid user of the library here in my community and Mason city where my children and grandchildren reside. This legislation would be very detrimental to the autonomy of our public libraries.

Name: Catherine Shook

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131. This bill would negatively impact over 500 public libraries. It needlessly and harmfully takes power away from both community members and professional library staff. Librarians are specially educated in areas of collection development, intellectual freedom, program development, and evaluating their communities needs. A bill such as this threatens to shift the power from trained experts into the hands of city council members who are not trained in these areas. At

best, this will reduce the quality of the public library and will serve to potentially strip community members of valuable resources and services. At worst, this will cause libraries to close as city and county funding will be reduced or eliminated. This would be devastating as many Iowans depend on libraries for internet access, job searching and skills development, literacy programming, cultural and educational opportunities, free meeting spaces, and so much more. It would serve to widen inequities and disempower communities. It would serve to take a safe space away from many in need of one. Libraries are a vibrant hub of access and community creation. We need measures that support this reality and not detract from it.

Name: Jan Danielson Kaiser

Comment: Another devastating blow to education and literacy. As a former library employee, former library foundation board member, current library user, and bookstore employee, I am appalled at this proposed legislation. Public library boards provide focus, transparency, and broader representation. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Do not allow this legislative overreach!

Name: Barb Keninger

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131! Speaking from a small rural town, this would add another responsibility to our struggling city councils who are already overburdened. Our city council currently appoints the library board members who are intelligent, thoughtful and dedicated citizens who report back to the council; so that is sufficient oversight for the city. To mess with the funding would devastate libraries who are already scraping bottom. Next to our schools, libraries are the hub of small communities and provide a safe environment with so many different resources to offer. Don't take that away!

Name: Polly Antonelli

Comment: The autonomy enjoyed by library boards across the state is what makes our libraries the bastion of free thought that they are. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131, undermines the democratic principles that guide local decisionmaking and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities. Repeated attempts have been made to do away with local autonomy, and several of these attempts have succeeded. We already feel the pain of this kind of legislation, and SSB 3131 is yet another step towards rule by the few over the many. Libraries are cornerstones of education, providing free access to information, technology, and cultural enrichment. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs. I am imploring opposition of SSB 3131.

Name: Rachel Rugg

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. This bill would harm all Iowans by taking away access to libraries. Public libraries are vital to our democracy. They offer educational resources, knowledge, and entertainment. Public libraries are places for people to gather, to learn, and to socialize. People can use computers, WiFi, and print stations to connect with others. Public libraries are vital to our communities in Iowa. They need to be funded. And they are governed by library boards that are doing an excellent job. No city council in this state wants the added burden of governing the local library. Please stop SSB 3131.

Name: Elizabeth Bauch

Comment: Our public library has a good relationship with our city council, but that may not be true for other libraries for a variety of reasons. I do not think that a city council should be able to reduce or eliminate a public library levy solely on its own authority. It should be up to local citizens to vote on any levy change, so that they can be

wellinformed about the impact on their library and all other public services.

Name: Alyssa Martin

Comment: I feel like the whole purpose and integrity of what a Library should be is being attacked. A library should be a place where individuality and differences should be celebrated, Where creativity and learning can soar and be free, But I believe by passing this bill it will take away the library's ability to cater towards the individuality of what its participants need. The Library board helps serves that purpose, by helping to create and approve things that help make library's succeeded in providing what its community needs. How will we be able to provide for the community and what it needs if we remove the voices that advocate for them. Please help us maintain the library's and people's voices by not passing ssb3131.

Name: Beverly Ibrahim

Comment: PLEASE, I have used Iowa's libraries, small (Tripoli and Janesville) to larger (Cedar Falls and Des Moines), my entire life;so, do everything you can to increase funding and autonomy for them. For years, I have visited our Norwalk Easter Public Library many days throughout the week with, or without, my grandsons. The services this library provides for me, us, and our community are ever expanding and much needed. For me, the library is the cultural center of our community. Lift up public libraries and the amazing staff within them!

Name: Beverly Ibrahim

Comment: PLEASE, I have used Iowa's libraries, small (Tripoli and Janesville) to larger (Cedar Falls and Des Moines), my entire life;so, do everything you can to increase funding and autonomy for them. For years, I have visited our Norwalk Easter Public Library many days throughout the week with, or without, my grandsons. The services this library provides for me, us, and our community are ever expanding and much needed. For me, the library is the cultural center of our community. Lift up public libraries and the amazing staff within them!

Name: Grant Sincox

Comment: I am opposed to this bill. I do not support removing authority from the library board or jeopardizing library funding in any way. This bill is unnecessary and not helpful to my community.

Name: Megan Murphy Salyer

Comment: When I grew up in Iowa, our independent thinking was the envy of most of the country. Our robust library system is how we grow and build independent thinkers. This bill is designed to destroy the foundation of our libraries: funding and independence. It is disgraceful and should not go to a vote. It does not solve a problem, it creates a society where we let the few control the lives of many. Reprehensible.

Name: Marjean Clemons

Comment: I am the director of the Ackley Public Library and I oppose this legislation. Libraries in Iowa are governed by Library Boards that oversee policy development and implementation. The library is not a "money making operation" and relies on funding from the city and the county to keep the doors open and provide services to everyone in the community. Previous legislation has already put some of this funding in jeopardy for FY 25. Libraries are an integral part of rural small towns, please keep them viable for the future.

Name: Mike Hummel

Comment: Dear Committee Members,Please do not allow SSB 3131 to pass. Iowa public libraries are an integral part of our communities. The libraries offer materials, services and programs that would otherwise not be available to most Iowans. This

proposed legislation hurts everyone in Iowa. Each community is unique and should maintain control of their own libraries to best provide library services to their communities. Libraries need continued state and local funding to operate. Please do not take this away. Iowa has a rich history of providing excellent education throughout the continuum, and local libraries are in integral part of what makes us successful in this arena.

Name: Pat Black

Comment: I am an avid patron of the Cambridge Library and I am very disturbed with the proposed bill SSB3131. Our government was established by the people and for the people. Our city library boards are made up with local citizens who use the library and have a firm understanding of the services and programs that these libraries provide. If these local board members lose their involvement at our city library, I feel the integrity of our great little library is lost. These people are volunteers. They are valued and respected for understanding what the library needs along with what services and programs will be helpful to our community. I urge you to destroy this bill.

Name: Tamara Byram Mahl

Comment: This bill is not the Iowa I was raised in and does not reflect our citizens values. It is misguided and alarming. Please vote no.

Name: John Hammond

Comment: My name is John Hammond and I am from Grinnell, Iowa. I serve on the board of the Drake Library here in Grinnell. I recently became aware of Bill SSB3131. The goal of this bill is to transfer authority of board membership from the Library to the City Council. It is similar to bills that have been introduced in other states in recent years like these: <https://1819news.com/news/item/statesenelliottfilesbilltoallowlocalauthoritiestoremoveboardmembersatwill> <https://lailluminator.com/2023/05/11/billtoallowlibraryboardmemberstobefiredwithoutcausekilledincommittee/> This bill is concerning for several reasons. First, because it transfers authority of board membership from the library to the city council. Library board members are volunteers and unpaid unlike other city representatives who are elected. Second, it is the politicization of the Library that while a public entity functions as a politically neutral organization. This attempt at power transfer violates the Code of Ethics from the American Library Association: "Statement VI of the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association: We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.¹ And also per Section 5 of the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers: Librarians and other information workers have the right to free speech in the workplace provided it does not infringe the principle of neutrality towards users.²"³ Lastly, there are many organizations in local communities that also rely on public funding and volunteers such as food pantries, community art organizations, park and rec, elderly assistance programs. Do we want to set a precedent that gives city councils authority to "fire" volunteers from these organizations as well? I urge you to not support this bill and not advance it further. Thank you, John Hammond

¹ Code of Ethics of the American Library Association, <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics>, retrieved on October 19, 2016.

² International Federation of Library Associations, IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers, retrieved on September 30, 2016, <http://www.ifla.org/news/iflancodeofethicsforlibrariansandotherinformationworkersfullversion>.

³ <https://publiclibrariesonline.org/2016/10/politicalethicskeepingyourlibraryneutral/#edn1>

Name: Rosalee Russell

Comment: I oppose this bill. Taking control of a library away from staff and patrons is

unacceptable and foolish. Do not let proceed further.

Name: Crystal Kruse

Comment: As a frequent patron of the Scott County Library System I ask that you please do not support SSB 3131.

Name: Molly Van Hemert

Comment: My children and I go to the Library in Pella, IA at least once a week. Please dont pass this bill. The library, the boards and the employees of our public library are all doing a great job. Our community is better because of the library. Our family is better because of the services, activities and resources at the Library. Dont pass this bill.

Name: Jody Hixson

Comment: I STRONGLY oppose SSB 3131. This bill undermines Iowa's libraries and will not benefit Iowans. Please stop the advancement of this bill.

Name: Amanda Bohnert

Comment: Any bill that limits or potentially negatively affects the library system in Iowa should be voted down. The local libraries are not only a center for books but also host so many amazing programs for families. My children have spent hours inside various libraries and my family has loved the programs offered. The libraries have been and continue to be one of the most surprising and wonderful things about moving to Iowa. Leave our libraries to continue to support Iowa !

Name: Jessica Cezar

Comment: I am writing as an Iowan, a public library user since childhood, a mother of children whom are now public library users, and a current board member of the Des Moines Public Library. I've tried and tried to understand the actual purpose and benefit of SB 3131 and have fallen extremely short. This bill completely undermines the authority and dedication of public library boards to provide the best resources and services for their communities. It puts libraries in financial jeopardy, puts more strain on city councils, (whom let's be honest, do not have the time nor interest to understand the day to day nuances of running a library). It hurts the community many of which rely on public libraries for life changing resources and honestly places politics and power grabs into something it should never be a part of. Instead, I recommend whomever is in agreement with this bill take the time to come visit a public library. Step inside and talk to the patrons. Talk to the directors, talk to the dedicated employees. Talk to the community. Immerse yourself in the day to day of what truly happens in a public library. If that was done in the first place, this bill wouldn't even be in discussion.

Name: Kurt Mielke

Comment: Please do not support the proposal regarding public libraries. Librarians have and should continue to be responsible for providing access to books and other materials requested by the public they serve. The current system has been working. fine for a very long time. I was under the impression Iowa Republicans are seeking less government control not more. This proposal goes in the wrong direction. Also please consider the importance of hearing or reading about all sides of an issue in order to understand it. This bill could limit citizens' ability to do this. Thanks

Name: Elaine M Brown

Comment: Please don't pass this bill! We don't want city councils in charge of libraries. Public libraries are increasingly important as safe spaces open to everyone for free. Everyone needs access to books and computers, regardless of income.

Name: A. Alanda Gregory

Comment: I am reaching out to ask you not to move forward with SSB 3131. Libraries play a

crucial role in fostering education, literacy, and community engagement. SSB 3131, as currently proposed, poses a threat to the continued effectiveness of our libraries and, by extension, the wellbeing of our citizens. I respectfully urge you to vote against this bill and advocate for policies that strengthen rather than weaken the essential services provided by Iowa Libraries.

Name: Scottie Van Iseghem

Comment: Public Libraries are the backbone of our community. I am writing in COMPLETE opposition of SSB 3131. This power grab and attempt at censorship MUST be blocked.

Name: Joseph Roth

Comment: Please abandon this bill libraries are a key part of communities, providing services and resources in a way that no other organization in the state is capable of. They need the flexibility to serve the needs of the local population, and do not need additional barriers in completing that work.

Name: Jarrod Blankenship

Comment: Libraries are and have been a significant cornerstone in many towns and cities. To remove the option of the community involvement would be a major detriment to them. Removing the power of the communities tjouggg hit an and actions from the community library is backward thinking and could potentially limit the progress and intellect of several people who use and rely on this public service.

Name: Christine Kingston

Comment: I completely oppose SSB 3131, it is completely unnecessary, and is trying to 'fix' something that isn't broken. The public library is one of the last public places where people can just exist, and this bill could take that away from many communities that rely on their libraries for so much more than just books. Leave our public libraries alone!!

Name: Anne Wilmoth

Comment: Please do not move forward with SSB3131. As a children's librarian at Iowa City Public Library (and lifelong patron of various Iowa public libraries), it's clear that Iowans of all political leanings, socioeconomic classes, ages, genders, abilities, races and ethnicities rely on, trust, and value their public library for a wide variety of resources and services (way beyond books the library functions as an information hub for the entire community, connecting them to other essential services as well as providing things like early literacy programming, English language learning classes, tech help, and much more). Removing Board control would also create vast wasted time and inefficiency in delivery of library services. The library board already provides citizen oversight and transparency but the board has specialized training and interest in library issues and is able to focus solely on developing a library that meets their community's needs. Please retain local control and base funding for libraries.

Name: Jane Rohde

Comment: Before deciding, please ask yourself this question: Why this even being discussed? Is it really in the best interest of the general public which include senior citizens to young children and every one in between who use the library . Then ask yourself what will be taken away from the general public.

Name: Rosemary Hinderaker

Comment: I am very much opposed to this bill, SSB 3131 re: public libraries. There is no need to move control from the library to a city council. Library boards are elected by the citizens and do a magnificent job.

Name: Mary Radloff

Comment: I strongly oppose Senate Study Bill 3131 which will undermine the autonomy of libraries in Iowa. It jeopardizes funding. It undermines democratic principles by stripping library boards of their powers. Our libraries are irreplaceable assets.

Name: Sara Neppel

Comment: I strongly opposed SSB 3131. Please do not move this bill forward. Library services are more and more critical in Iowa.

Name: Teresa Galluzzo

Comment: I am opposed to SSB 3131. Libraries build community.

Name: Susan Mesecher

Comment: Please do not support SSB 3131. Without Public Library Boards, City Councils will have added responsibilities that will extend the length of every City Council meeting. They will be responsible for searching for and interviewing every new Director, conducting the annual review, or giving that added workload to the City Manager. Every policy the library enacts, or updates will need to be reviewed and discussed by subcommittees and discussed at City Council meetings for approval. Our library has 19 policies that need to be reviewed at least every 2 years. The Library Board of Trustees subcommittees also discuss the future of the library, help create a Strategic Plan every 35 years, help publicize the library, and provide support to the Director and staff. They help us focus our Budgets on items most needed to improve service to the community and work to keep our infrastructure maintained. The Five Primary Responsibilities of Boards Hiring the Library DirectorThe board hires a qualified person to manage the daily operations of the library, working with and in support of the director while mutually respecting each others roles. Approving and Monitoring the Budget Library boards typically have a great deal of authority over the library budget, including approving expenditures, and moving funds between line items.Developing and Adopting PoliciesLibrary boards must be mindful that they adopt public policy for a public service. They should take care to avoid writing policies that are reactionary or punitive. Instead, policy development should keep community interests at the forefront. Once adopted by the board, library staff work to carry out the policies and communicate them to patrons.Planning for the Librarys FuturePlanning is another important function of the board and should be approached as a continuous process. Planning leads boards to explore possibilities and opportunities, basing decisions on community input and packaging service in response to community needs.Evaluating Service and Advocating for AdvancementsThe community puts its faith in the library board to make sure the library is operating within the public trust. The board helps determine whether the community is satisfied with library programming and services. One of the most effective ways to gauge satisfaction with library service is by evaluating the library directors job performance. Note that trustees can also evaluate their own performance! In exercising this evaluation and advocacy role, boards are pushing for adequate funding, seeking technology advancements, fostering community relationships, and supporting the library staff in terms of salaries, benefits, and working conditions. Public Library Board of Trustees are volunteers serving their community. Without these dedicated volunteers Directors will not have the support they need to help their libraries thrive. Libraries in Iowa, especially ones in rural libraries with little to no staff will be in danger of closing if this is passed.

Name: Veronica Ruse

Comment: For context, I work as a library assistant at Drake Community Library in Grinnell. I love our public library and the services we provide for our community. Every day I interact with community members and serve the public in a meaningful capacity. Library workers help patrons find library books, solve technology problems, book meeting rooms, research reference questions, enjoy a wide array of programming for all ages, and fulfill all their information needs. I believe libraries provide an essential

service for a democratic society and that every resident of the United States has a right to information. Library services are provided to the community free of charge because we are a publicly funded institution. We rely on taxpayer dollars to fulfill our mission of providing access to information for all and eliminating barriers to information because of one's income level. To that end, library levy dollars are an essential part of the library budget. To eliminate library levy dollars is to sever an essential revenue stream for the public library. A public library without funding leads to the slow erosion of our public institutions at the expense of the many children, teenagers, parents, adults, and seniors who rely on our services. I understand that some patrons are offended by the titles they see on the shelves at the public library for personal, religious, or moral reasons. However, I believe it ultimately serves our democracy to make all manner of materials available to the public without censorship. Public libraries provide impartial access to a wide variety of reading materials across the political and ideological spectrum. This is the mission that the library board seeks to uphold, and I believe that this mission will be undermined if the library board is stripped of their power to serve in an independent capacity. I believe decisions about how the library's budget and finances should be spent, including which books should be purchased for the library, should rest with the Library Director. Allowing elected city officials to make decisions about library collections risks introducing political bias into the material selection process. To do so would undermine the very purpose of the public library as impartial in the fulfillment of our duties to the public. I hope you will consider this information as this bill is debated and voted on. Veronica RuseGrinnell, IA

Name: Susan Mesecher

Comment: My comment was incorrectly edited. It should say "Strategic Plan every 3 to 5 years"

Name: Sarah Rushton

Comment: Do not vote for SSB 3131. Libraries are an essential component of free acquisition and dispersion of information, and doing this could potentially destroy many public libraries.

Name: Cheryl Benson

Comment: I am writing in strong opposition to SSB 3131. Free, public libraries are one of our country's best services. The proposed changes would take all independence away from the library and board. I can only believe that this is being done so that it is easier to ban books which goes exactly the opposite of what libraries stand for. This is an awful, terrible, hateful bill. PLEASE vote NO.

Name: Michael May

Comment: I am opposed to SSB 3131 because it will make it more difficult for local library boards to resist censorship, and it will endanger public library funding. A similar effort was rejected a few months ago by voters in Pella, Iowa. After the local library board decided against removing one LGBTQ book that a few people were politicizing, a ballot measure was added in an attempt to give control of the public library to city officials. The measure failed because Pella voters do not want their mayor or city council to have the power to ban library books, or to have an incentive to close their community's library for political purposes. SSB 3131 does just this. Instead of bringing communities together by promoting books and reading for everyone, it encourages censorship and turns local public libraries into divisive political battlegrounds.

Name: Megan Burns

Comment: Drop this, libraries are best with local control.

Name: Sebastien Dalin

Comment: Please reconsider this bill. Don't remove the ability of libraries to serve their community.

Name: Antonia Krupicka-Smith

Comment: I am writing to express my concern for SSB3131. This bill doesnt support libraries or communities. It takes away local control and threatens access to resources and services in communities. Please do not further this bill.

Name: Suzan McKiness

Comment: As s lifelong patron of Iowas public libraries, I strongly oppose SSB3131! Some of my favorite childhood memories are of going to the library to check out as many books as they would allow and then returning the next week to replenish my supply. As an adult I greatly appreciate the opportunity to borrow ebooks along with the usual hard copies. One of my grandchildrens favorite activities is to visit the library to enjoy the many opportunities provided by the childrens librarians. Please do not pass SSB3131.

Name: Cheryl Pellett

Comment: As a long time trustee of the Decorah Public Library I oppose SSB3131. The way the libraries work is not broken so what are you trying to fix? Leave our libraries alone and let them continue to flourish for the people of our state! Have you visited your library lately?

Name: Deb Kelley

Comment: I am writing today to say I am against this bill. I am not sure why the government is getting involved in a local issue? We are a public library run by local citizens and we can make decisions about what is in our library without government involvement. Please consider voting against this bill and leave local libraries alone. We as a family take advantage of the books and other services offered at our local library.

Name: Sharon Groene

Comment: Please stop this bill. Citizens who serve on library boards are dedicated to giving of their time and expertise to supporting the mission of the library. I cannot imagine that the city councils have any desire to add the library to their already heavy responsibilities. Let the library board continue to do their job of helping the library provide all the free services that our citizens enjoy. Please stop this bill from moving forward.

Name: Elizabeth Estling

Comment: Libraries are one of the last places where everyone is welcome. Everyone. This isn't some left wing haven everyone is welcome. There are conservative groups who hold meetings at our libraries as well. Libraries should be run by librarians and communities not politicians. I thought republicans wanted to keep politics out of local places? ALL information is available at libraries not just one side. Every side. This is just a threat to make libraries stop providing services that are needed to people. Libraries and people need to be able to exist without the threat of a government coming for them. Honestly even if city councils make the choices and Kim doesn't like them, she's just going to pull their power and give it to someone she likes. Stop the power grabs and just let Iowans live.

Name: Amy Lillard

Comment: Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries.

Name: Katie Routh

Comment: I am writing to express my deep concern for SSB3131. I thought those we elected to

the legislature were working to KEEP local control and limit government oversight/control. This bill does exactly the opposite! Our students depend on the library as an important resource and it does an excellent job of serving them and the community. Please do not further this bill.

Name: Kay Pence

Comment: I am strongly opposed to SSB 3131. I believe in local control and having a strong public library is essential for our communities. Please kill this bill. Thanks you

Name: Rachel Kuipers

Comment: I oppose bill SSB3131 as it takes away control of library boards and puts it in the hands of the already overworked city councils. Library boards are made up of community members who are passionate about intellectual freedom for their fellow citizens. This bill will politicize libraries and cause many financial problems. Please stop this bill from continuing.

Name: Aurora Royer

Comment: This bill is a step back and not necessary. It takes away access and information. Vote no on Bill SSB 3131.

Name: Jennifer Hummel

Comment: Please do not allow SSB 3131 to pass. Iowa public libraries are an integral part of our communities. The libraries offer materials, services, and programs that would otherwise not be available to many Iowans. Books, computers, a place to apply for jobs, to study, to gather with others, and just to learn! This proposed legislation would hurt Iowans immensely. Each community is unique and should maintain control of their own libraries to best provide library services to their community. Libraries need continued state and local funding to operate. Please do not take this away. Iowa has a rich history of providing excellent education throughout the continuum, and we are national leaders in this space. Libraries are part of what got us here. Please help continue to support our local libraries. Jennifer Hummel Coralville

Name: Kelsey Patterson

Comment: As a librarian and lifelong library user, I am STRONGLY AGAINST and urge you to REJECT SSB3131. Public Library Boards of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. This will not make the work of city management easier. It will foist off specialized training, focus, time, attention, and advocacy given to libraries through their passionately dedicated volunteer Boards of Trustees to city staff with fewer resources than ever before. Why fix what isn't broke?!?

Name: Philip Goldfarb Styrt

Comment: As an avid library user and Iowa voter, I'm asking you not to further this legislation. It solves no problem and creates many, most notably by destabilizing already effective libraries. Iowa used to be known for an informed and intellectual citizenry; let us not undo that further. Public libraries, and their independence, are essential.

Name: Sue Ketelsen

Comment: Please reconsider SSB3131. I worry about losing the autonomy of our public libraries and the loss of levy funds which is needed to provide the vast amount of services provided by our local public library.

Name: Devendra Shrikhande

Comment: This comment is in opposition to SSB 3131. I am the member of the general public and a patron with no official capacity in any library system and am curious as to the benefit/purpose of this bill. "Fixing" something that is not broken and removing the allimportant role of having local community members (library board) have a say in helping shape the direction of such a vital community resource as their public libraries. Please drop this bill and focus on other more important issues rather than creating just another reason for youth and future generations of Iowans to leave this state.

Name: Kaleigh Rogers

Comment: Please reject this bill. Our public libraries are needed sanctuaries for anyone needing a safe place to land and escape worries for a moment to get engrossed in a good book. Not to mention the leveling power that comes with the ability to check out knowledge for free. Library funding must remain mandatory and local boards are essential to maintaining local control. Communities rely on their local libraries for learning and wholesome (free) activities.

Name: Stacy Moore

Comment: I strongly oppose this legislation. My family and I are decadeslong users of our local libraries. We rely on them and have enjoyed them for learning and recreation opportunities in our city. Our local library board members, with thoughtful and strategic guidance, along with input from library volunteers and patrons, provide a space essential to our community. Library resources and programs are a public good. Aligned with state educational goals for schooled children, our local library offers a range of parent/childrens literacy programs and activitiesefforts that emphasize the value of learning and becoming lifelong readers. Our local library also serves all ages of community members (children to seniors) and is recognized nationwide for its development of books, materials, and technologies that reflect the depth and range of peoples learning interests and needs. Our local library is a central space for the vibrance and growth of this community.As shared from libraries across the state, this bill is damaging to communities and citizens as it:*changes the way a library board is created and could take away authority of the local library board.*does not maintain separation of elected officials and the operations of the public library which undermine intellectual freedom.*eliminates the required levy of 6 cents for public libraries and instead make that levy optional. As such, there would be no required funding for public libraries in the state of Iowa.*Libraries would no longer be able to possess any property, directing a city to take title of all property possessed of acquired by the library board on or after July 1, 2025.I strongly oppose this bill.

Name: Charlie Strey

Comment: Here we go again. This comment is in opposition to SSB 3131. I am the member of the general public and a patron with no official capacity in any library system and am curious as to the benefit/purpose of this bill. "Fixing" something that is not broken and removing the allimportant role of having local community members (library board) have a say in helping shape the direction of such a vital community resource as their public libraries. Please drop this bill and focus on other more important issues. The assault on free inquiry through the library and our public schools needs to stop. You are handicapping the youth of Iowa for years to come.

Name: Thomas O'Donnell

Comment: I raised two children who were avid readers and heavy users of the local library. I made it my responsibility to know what they read and ensure the materials they checked out were appropriate for them. I sometimes returned books when I believed they weren't mature enough to read them.That was my responsibility, not the library's. Parents have the right to limit what their children read. They also have the personal responsibility to monitor their children's media consumption. They do not have the right to dictate what other children, parents and adults can or cannot read.SSB3131 appears to be an attempt to exert political control over municipal

libraries' policies and content. I fear it will lead to a minority of citizens dictating or restricting what the majority can read. This is not freedom. Please reject this bill.

Name: Lacey Plants

Comment: I am opposed to this bill. We need to keep the libraries out of politics. What I read is my choice, the same as everyone else. Access to reading materials of different types furthers education and allows people to gain knowledge and skills. Also, the library provides reading material to people who may not otherwise have access to these things. Not everyone can afford to buy a new book, or has access to the needed reading materials they want online.

Name: Jessica Young

Comment: Iowans depend on libraries for so many vital resources. And the people who depend on them the most are often times the ones who are heard the least. Libraries need to be funded so that they can provide crucial resources (internet, job help, literacy building programming, safe spaces) to the citizens of Iowa. Passing this bill would take away the certainty that all Iowa libraries would be able to continue providing these services. Libraries are here to invigorate and enhance communities! Please do not limit or take away their ability to do this!

Name: Cara Muta

Comment: Im firmly opposed to this and ask you to vote against this.

Name: Linda Kaysen

Comment: Our libraries are the heart of our communities. Through their programs, materials of books and technology, and inviting spaces to learn and grow they accommodate ALL ages. Because each community is unique and has different demographics and interests, it is imperative that they remain under local direction and oversight. Please do not deprive our communities of local control

Name: Lisa Moe

Comment: As a librarian and former resident of Iowa, I am absolutely appalled by the proposed bill. Librarians are trained professionals, entrusted by their boards to ensure that the collections and programs of the library are for everyone. Everyone. Giving city councils carte blanche to disrupt library boards and tax levies is a dangerous position to take. The possible power grabs are unconscionable. Trust library boards to hire the right people to do the jobs they have been trained to do. Fund them as fully as possible so that they can continue in their missions of providing access to information for all. Thank you for your time.

Name: Megan Collins

Comment: I'm an Iowa resident and homeschool mom. Our family, as well as many homeschool families, are avid library users. The library provides access to educational materials and programming, as well as a welcoming and enriching place to gather. I oppose SSB 3131 because it undermines the ability of public libraries to serve their communities. Strong libraries are vital to our children's wellbeing. I strongly oppose SB 3131 and encourage you to vote against it.

Name: Janene Parks

Comment: Who/what is behind this bill? Do they even know how public libraries and their Boards operate? Please educate yourselves about the operation and management of public libraries. Then you will understand this legislation is totally misguided. There is absolutely NO reason to alter the current management/budgets of public libraries. This makes no sense whatsoever and must come from whomever doesn't understand. Please don't let this pass!

Name: Kaya Young

Comment: To whom it may concern, My name is Kaya Young and I firmly oppose the bill SSB 3131 because it is a threat to the welcoming community of education, and growth created by The Johnston Public Library. This bill will ultimately allow for the restriction of library funding and the unjust regulation of library activities. The public, the community that uses the library, and its staff should be able to control their own affairs. Without the representation provided by the library board, the needs of the public will go unheard and unmet. As a result, the welcoming community of learning, offering one of the few third spaces could be transformed into an unfamiliar, or even harmful environment. If this bill is passed longer to serve the public or itself, in its full capacity. Libraries are crucial for you kids beginning to develop literary skill. I can say as student at Henry A. Wallace Elementary School and a graduate of Johnston High School, the value of Johnston Public Library within the our city of Johnston community is unparalleled. I hope you will understand that this bill cannot be passed under any circumstances because the effects would strongly negatively impact the Johnston community. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Kaya Young

Name: Bettie Bolar

Comment: I am a voting citizen of Marshall County and an avid library patron. SSB3131 is a serious threat to the operational and financial sustainability of our community public library. We past a levy by a significant majority and this would strip voters of their voices. Our library is an irreplaceable asset; one that serves all ages, provides early literacy opportunities, computer services for job hunters, a meeting place for community organizations, and socialization for older adults. It is one of the economic drivers of our community. Bottom line voters approved a levy for funding which in a Democracy should mean something.

Name: Kelly McAlister

Comment: Ive been a trustee of the Johnston Public library for almost 10 years. Trustees take their role very seriously to be sure that the library is run effectively and for the good of their entire community. Im strongly against this bill as it would take local control away from our libraries. People from all walks of life use the library, and overseeing the budget and policies should not be political. Handing over the duties of the Library Board to the City Council would do just that. This bill would also hurt the already limited budget constraints that our public libraries are working within. Ive read through all the comments, and everyone is speaking up about stopping this bill. There are no comments for this bill. Iowans love their public libraries and all the services they provide. Please dont mess with a good thing.

Name: Kennedy LaVille Thoren

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. As someone who grew up in the public library, and continues to regularly visit and benefit from the local library, I am deeply concerned with the proposals in this bill. The city council should not oversee the library. Let communities decide their own best interests through an invested and informed Library Board of Trustees.

Name: Sarah Brakke

Comment: No to SSB3131. Public libraries provide access to many sources of information and programming in our communities. Politicizing libraries is a scary prospect.

Name: Jasmine Young

Comment: Vote no! It is so ridiculous we are going to be potentially legislating access to books for people to access. Why are we putting more barriers to accessing information. Stop trying to make Iowans more sheltered. Focus on legislation that actually benefits everyone rather than trying to legislate your moral objections. We are struggling to feed families and afford rent. Focus on that.

Name: Jesse Hill

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. As an older adult who cannot afford to purchase books via Amazon, the library is my resource. During Covid our librarian and staff worked tirelessly answering calls and loading books into our trunks. It helped across the community to survive those tough days of isolation. As a young mother, I took my children to the library weekly as reading is essential to learning in all subjects. I see young parents in the library each time I go so I believe this is a still a common belief. I do not understand this drive to ban books and take the power away from our local library boards who know our community needs best. Is this a plan to dumb down America? If so, what is the purpose and what are you afraid of?

Name: Marielle Redington

Comment: Libraries have been such a huge part of my life, and through my career as a teacher, school librarian, and public librarian, I have seen so many children and families grow and thrive with the support of books and their library, both as a stepping stone for early literacy and a hub for community connection. I believe libraries are essential for Iowans of all ages for a myriad of reasons, and removing funding and the ability for library board of trustees to have agency is detrimental to all of the communities that would be affected by this bill. If anything I believe we would see the positive growth of a community by investing more in our public libraries, why would the state choose to negatively impact that potential for a community to thrive? Just off the top of my head I have seen children learn early literacy skills (singing, talking, reading, writing, playing), new families make connections with others, ESL families learn English by attending programs, hungry children satiated by a free daily snack, families with children with sensory issues connecting and engaging in a comfortable, safe environment, eager patrons, babies through senior citizens, thrilled for their weekly bookmobile visit to their neighborhood or school, library programming representing all kinds of cultures and religions, new skills for success and fun being taught for free, digital resources offered and instructed on how to use, access to free museum visits, a safe and warm place to exist on a dangerously cold day, without the expectation to spend money. Lets continue to support this daily positive impact libraries have on the community instead of hindering by passing this harmful bill.

Name: Tiffany Ahrens

Comment: As a lifetime user of Iowa libraries and raising my child to be one as well, I strongly oppose this piece of legislation. Our public libraries provide an invaluable service to our communities and families around the state, providing programming that engages and enriches our communities, and need to be appropriately funded to continue to their important missions. Summer Reading programs help engage our kids in reading when school is out. Teen programs give those kids a place to go that is not only safe, but constructive activities and skills. Libraries need appropriate funding in order to help all Iowans.

Name: Marielle Redington

Comment: Libraries have been such a huge part of my life, and through my career as a teacher, school librarian, and public librarian, I have seen so many children and families grow and thrive with the support of books and their library, both as a stepping stone for early literacy and a hub for community connection. I believe libraries are essential for Iowans of all ages for a myriad of reasons, and removing funding and the ability for library board of trustees to have agency is detrimental to all of the communities that would be affected by this bill. If anything I believe we would see the positive growth of a community by investing more in our public libraries, why would the state choose to negatively impact that potential for a community to thrive? Just off the top of my head I have seen children learn early literacy skills (singing, talking, reading, writing, playing), new families make connections with others, ESL families learn English by attending programs, hungry children satiated by a free daily snack, families with children with sensory issues connecting and engaging in a comfortable, safe environment, eager patrons, babies through senior citizens, thrilled for their weekly

bookmobile visit to their neighborhood or school, library programming representing all kinds of cultures and religions, new skills for success and fun being taught for free, digital resources offered and instructed on how to use, access to free museum visits, a safe and warm place to exist on a dangerously cold day, without the expectation to spend money. Lets continue to support this daily positive impact libraries have on the community instead of hindering by passing this harmful bill.

Name: Sally Solomon

Comment: Drop SSB 3131 regarding public libraries. We are happy with the services they provide at this time & would kindly ask you to leave well enough alone. Local control for public offices & services ensures the people are being served. No to SSB 3131

Name: Katie Redington

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. First the AEAs, now the libraries. A quote I saw about this bill sums up my feelings perfectly: "Government can only be for the people when it is of the people and by the people." This bill undermines the autonomy of Iowa public libraries, threatens funding, and dismantles library board authority. Library boards understand the unique needs of their communities and work tirelessly to support and promote library services. The board members participate in continuing education to ensure the library is meeting the needs of the community. Local library boards know best how to allocate funds; ensuring that resources are directed where most needed. Libraries serve as cornerstones of education, providing free access to information and technology. This bill would inflict unnecessary harm on our libraries, cities, and patrons. Please do not move forward with this bill. This measure seriously threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. City councils have plenty of other matters to address and the library boards are made up of people who are knowledgeable about library operations and programming needs while being dedicated to supporting their community. Iowans do not want this bill.

Name: Richard Goldfarb

Comment: As a lifelong library user who was involved with library policy in another state before I moved to Iowa, I strongly oppose consideration of SSB 3131. I've spent a lot of time in libraries not just in Davenport but in other Iowa communities. Even if I'm looking for something specific, I always browse the shelves just to see what is available to the community. I've always been impressed at the breadth of topics and points of view contained on those shelves, even if very divergent from my own interests or point of view. This is the sign of a wellmanaged and welloperated library whose intent to serve the entire community is fulfilled, not just lip service. Our libraries are not broken. Please don't break them.

Name: Elizabeth Klousia

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. Libraries are a necessity for the education of a community. They make sure information is available to all, regardless of income. It's integral to democracy to have an educated electorate and libraries are part of that equation.

Name: Elizabeth Klousia

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. Libraries are a necessity for the education of a community. They make sure information is available to all, regardless of income. It's integral to democracy to have an educated electorate and libraries are part of that equation.

Name: Mary McConnell Ward

Comment: I raised my kids in Iowa City and the library was a vital part of their lives. Each weekend we would make the trek to the library. As a single mom, I wasn't able to

buy them books, but the library afforded them the opportunity to read books that interested them. They are, now in their 30s. readers, thanks to the library. FUND LIBRARIES!!

Name: Honey Bedell

Comment: SSB 3131 is unnecessary legislation that will limit our local public libraries ability to serve our communities. Strong libraries, led by dedicated professionals and overseen by knowledgeable local trustees, are critical elements of thriving communities. These libraries must be appropriately funded and free from the directives of any political agenda. Eliminating required public funding for public libraries is shortsighted, potentially leading to a severe lack of resources for these institutions that serve ALL Iowans.

Name: Susan Eberly

Comment: I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Study Bill 3131, which threatens the funding of public libraries by calling for amending the language of the existing law to read may levy a tax of instead of shall levy a tax of This could end the public funding of our system of FREE public libraries, which would do harm to communities throughout Iowa, particularly to our smaller, poorer, rural communities. Doing this has the very potential to harm rural Iowans, and particularly Iowa youngsters, by limiting even further their access to information. But we have the internet now, right? First, not all Iowans have access to reliable internet services. Second, the internet is not truly interactive. It isolates, rather than connects. My experience with public libraries has been that they do the opposite. From interactions among kids and families coming to check out books to interactions by children and librarians, libraries are places that connect people. Further, libraries have become community centers in small towns, hosting events and again bringing people together. My own small hometown had a Carnegie Library, thanks to businessman Andrew Carnegie, who founded 1,869 American libraries. A staunch advocate of democracy, he believed in the value of libraries, saying There is no such cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library. And as a successful businessman, he knew how valuable libraries were as an investment, saying, No use to which money could be applied is so productive of good to girls and boys who have good within them. I spent many happy hours in our town's Carnegie Library. Today, I continue to use our local public library on a regular basis. My own children continue to love the libraries in their own communities, as do their children. I believe, with Carnegie, that spending state dollars on something as valuable to our communities, and to our children, as free public libraries is an excellent use for my tax dollars. Legislation that undermines our free public library system this immensely valuable community resource should be opposed.

Name: Martha Fifield

Comment: As a lifelong library user, and the mother and grandmother of avid library users, I urge you to please reject SSB 3131. Funding our libraries and maintaining robust citizen oversight through local library boards is crucial to our communities, whether urban or rural. Our libraries uphold our freedom of speech and our rights to access information, at no charge, no matter who we are. Libraries are for everyone and are vital to education and to creating and supporting lifelong learners. Please do not politicize our libraries.

Name: Barbara Kuttler

Comment: My family is firmly against SSB 3131. Have you ever read Fahrenheit 451 (extra points if you name the author)? Actually, living in Iowa, I am beginning to suspect the ultraconservative Republicans in control HAVE read Fahrenheit 451 and are using it as a playbook to wrest personal intellectual freedom from all persons, not just schoolchildren. Ideas are the enemy to dictators shame on you for continuing to censor and take away personal liberties. We are considering leaving Iowa due solely to this sort of fascist government action.

Name: Ashley Johnson

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131

Name: Susan Ryan-Anderson

Comment: Absolutely NO to SSB 3131! I grew up across the street from our public library in Marion, Iowa. It was my second home. Our public libraries are sacred spaces for our future generations. Dont ruin a good thing.

Name: Cathy Struecker

Comment: In your mind's eye, step back in time. Go all the way back to the time you were a young child and set foot in a library for the first time. If you didn't have the ability to actually do this because of parental negligence, then I want you to imagine yourself as a young child walking into a building, walls lined with books. Books of all colors and filled with beautiful pictures. Imagine colorful displays and tables and chairs just your size. There are grownups around you, but they don't hush you or look at you like you aren't supposed to be there. Instead, they give little smile. Inside they're remembering their own sense of wonder and curiosity as a child. They know the possibility that awaits you by opening a book. And in this place you are welcomed. In fact they are excited to see you. You're told you can look at as many books as you like and even bring some home for a short while. You feel as though it's Christmas morning. You excitedly await as the person behind the desk checks out your books then hands them to you without requiring any money. You leave with confidence, feeling empowered at the possibility that nothing is impossible. Now each thing you return to this place called a library, you soak in the smell of the books and it brings you back to that first moment... the moment you got to decide your own destiny. Please set this silly bill aside. We need Public libraries as much as we need clean water for all. Libraries expand the possibility for all and nurture the idea that everyone has a chance to do and be anything in this world.

Name: Maddie Bassman

Comment: I oppose SB 3131. As a lifelong Iowan, this could be detrimental to some of the last community spaces in our state. The library changed my life as a child and as an adult. Free access to information should be available to all Iowans.

Name: Rachael Carlson

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131. Its a terrible bill.

Name: Barb Nelson

Comment: Public libraries are the lifeblood of communities. Where else can you just show up for quiet time to read, use a computer, or meet with friends to complete a project in a totally accepting environment. Books and references are there for anyone to use and we depend on a nonpartisan director to make the decisions with a library board on books and resources that will serve ALL citizens. I wonder if your purpose for this bill is to make more money available to cities since your tax bill from last year took money away? Please do not use libraries to fund your tax breaks.

Name: Pati VanZante

Comment: Pella has just voted NO to a referendum to alter and attack city library board authority of local library. One of the most conservative Republican communities in Iowa voted to NOT change library governance and funding. Do not pass this bill! It is a NOTso subtle attempt to get greater government control over libraries and control access to ideas. VOTE NO!!! Stop the attacks on Constitutional freedom of speech and ideas.

Name: Tracey Garvis Graves

Comment: The Public Library Board of Trustees provides focus, transparency, and a broader

representation of the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries.

Name: Veronica Armstrong

Comment: I am opposed to SSB3131. Public libraries are essential to a successful, knowledgeable community and should not face these types of extra unnecessary challenges to their ability to provide a wide range of materials and with the autonomy that has successfully given them the ability to do so for a very long time.

Name: Katherine Bryden

Comment: No. Please, not another politically motivated attack on intellectual freedom and local control of libraries. Our public libraries have worked quite well as they are currently funded and overseen by the communities they serve. My husband works at the Cedar Falls public library and sees people from all parts of our community come to the library for information, research, entertainment, printing services, job searches, refuge from an unstable housing situation, or just to surf the web and read the news. My son is on the volunteer Teen Advisory Board, and takes great pride in that role. The Teen Room and Teen Librarian offer educational programming and a safe place for kids to spend time and feel welcome, and it is a place that they can congregate in real life without spending money or being told to move along. The levy monies for our local library is one of the community's best uses of our communal dollars. I oppose SB 3131 most adamantly.

Name: M. Dorsett

Comment: There are plenty of things you can clean up in Iowa. Support libraries and quit picking away at what constitutes the common good.

Name: Deb Talan

Comment: Adding my voice to the SOLID NO on this one. Others have offered thoughtful and detailed reasons why. NO thank you to city government overtaking local library control.

Name: Jamie Noack

Comment: I am in sound opposition to SSB 3131! Public libraries in Iowa are a hub for the community. They are a place where everyone is welcome to meet, learn and grow. The Library is where people meet for coffee. The Library is where children learn to love books through story times and programs. The Library is where people learn new skills including everything from how to turn on a computer and use a mouse to how to knit a sweater. The Library is where people get help applying for jobs. The Library is where a resident can borrow a mobile hotspot when the internet goes out in their neighborhood. The Library is where residents can find a food pantry when they need some extra help. And The Library is where people can SSB 3131 puts The Library at serious risk of funding cuts while threatening intellectual freedom that is at the core of its mission. This bill provides no benefit to the residents of Iowa. It only serves to politicize library services.

Name: David Faldet

Comment: Public libraries are a vital cornerstone of democracy. When I walk into my local library, I see it providing access to information and a larger world to the elderly, the young, the rural, the underprivileged, and the hungering for more from households across the social spectrum. The volunteer board which runs the library is dedicated to serving that broad public. The legislation proposed in SSB3131 would allow special interests, and thinly informed bureaucrats to put up bars between library services and the people now served. It nudges Iowa closer to Iran's theocracy or Russia's autocracy, and the high fences placed there between the public and a larger

world, and the fetters placed on freedom of inquiry and speech in those places. I have, in my life, been proud of Iowa for the generous community spirit and the high level of dedication to public education reflected in public libraries as they are now constituted. I fear for the degradation of those treasures reflected in SSB3131.

Name: Michelle Andersen

Comment: I am opposed to SSB3131 if for no other reason than the code requiring tax dollars to be set aside for libraries would no longer exist. Libraries contribute so much more than just books to their communities. It is right and necessary for the public good to invest public funds in public libraries.

Name: Lisa Petrie

Comment: I am vehemently opposed to SSB 3131, just as I am opposed to every other attempt by supposed "small government" Republicans to strip Iowans of local and personal control of our schools, our bodies, our right to seek medical care, our land, what we read. Enough. Please do not advance this bill.

Name: Teresa Dahlgren

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. Library board members reflect their communities and offer local control without the political considerations that often drive elected officials. The current board system is not broken, and does not need fixing. Library collections and assets should be overseen by a board. The Iowa Legislature has already removed the ability of many cities to pay for their libraries by consolidating library levies into the general fund during the last session. There is no reason to accelerate this process and further undermine the ability of libraries to provide services for their communities.

Name: Merideth Willett

Comment: I am writing to oppose SSB 3131. I never thought in my lifetime I would see a bill like this. What problem is it trying to solve? This bill is unnecessary. Library Boards are appointed by local elected officials. The library trustees are dedicated volunteers that support libraries providing engaging programming and quality services to all citizens. This bill also eliminates library funding for institutions that are already sorely underfunded. Please do not move forward with this bill. It is not in the best interest of Iowans.

Name: Pat Kenner

Comment: Please! Do not even consider this bill! Public libraries provide too many services to their communities from infants to seniors to consider reducing the funding to allow them to provide programming, community services, a place to read, a place to find materials, and engage with others. The uses of libraries are myriad. Each community has special programming designed, prepared, and presented, based on that community's interests and needs. Professional librarians provide reference and specialized services well beyond that of "google" and search engines. Don't lose this valued community resource!

Name: Victoria Fernandez

Comment: As a lifelong library user and a Teen Services Librarian, I fervently oppose SSB 3131. Attempting to control our Iowa library boards is a devastating oversight. It will result in library-appointed, passionate city volunteers who are well-versed in the needs of our local communities being replaced by outside appointed officials who likely will not have the necessary knowledge to soundly adopt library policies; nor the experience and expertise to plan, direct, and control the affairs of our public libraries. This will also take more of our city's time and resources they don't have. As a Teen Librarian, I understand that our public libraries are one of the few safe places in our towns and cities where young people from all backgrounds, regardless of their socioeconomic background, religion, race, political beliefs, physical and mental abilities can learn, socialize, and thrive. Libraries transform lives. My particular

library has had several board members with backgrounds in education: which is hugely beneficial to youth services decisionmaking policies and the other board members are highly adept in other professions, which only makes us stronger overall as an institution. Having a diverse, skilled, community focused, library appointed board has served Iowa libraries thus far and there is absolutely no need this process needs to change. Changing the language from "shall" to "may" levy a tax will absolutely mean that some small rural libraries will no longer be able to keep their doors open. They rely on this revenue. All of our Iowa libraries do. This bill is an attack on intellectual freedom and will absolutely have lasting negative impacts if it advances. Please vote no on SSB 3131.

Name: Joa LaVille

Comment: SSB 3131 is very misguided and unnecessary. The longheld system of independent library boards is a deliberate goal of keeping public libraries and collections out of political gameplaying. Library board members are excellent stewards of the funds and the important mission of public libraries to have a balanced collection that reflects the community, and to support a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere open to all members of the community. Moving away from this system seems to be based on an agenda that would dismantle the Iowa public library system that so many people from all kinds of backgrounds rely on and appreciate. Trust libraries and library boards and maintain public libraries the way they are. Let's focusing on solving real problems in our state and not trying to "fix" something that isn't broken. Why is the state legislature working on bills that Iowans don't want? Why is the state legislature taking away library levy funds that voters actually voted to earmark for libraries? Like the attacks on public education, SSB 3131 is just another attack on libraries, one of the best and most equalizing mechanisms for lifelong learning.

Name: Kylie Buddin

Comment: Please vote no on this bill. Libraries need the independence they get from Board governance. The content in libraries should not be controlled by the sway of the political winds. Democracy requires independent thought and the challenging of the status quo. This bill will harm all libraries to maintain independence of thought and the ability to meet all citizens needs.

Name: Anne Thomas

Comment: Stop this bill! Public Libraries are just that PUBLIC. They serve the public in so many ways, not just as a repository for books. Although the books are the primary and absolutely vital consideration, libraries offer so much more. To close them down wont stop learning, but it may delay or restrict it. Iowa has always been a place where people care for one another. We pride ourselves on educational progress. Libraries are a place where this care and education take place. Dont restrict our future.

Name: Juli Redington

Comment: I am from Illinois but live here to be close to my children. I say no to your proposition. Stop doing stupid things like this that make the Iowa citizens want to leave Iowa.

Name: Erin Coughlin

Comment: Iowa's longstanding tradition of great public libraries supporting great communities is in grave danger if this bill passes. The autonomy of library boards and adequate city funding are crucial to intellectual freedom and equitable access for all. Public libraries support Iowa's families in more ways than can ever be listed here with access to wifi and computers, books for all ages, programming to support literacy and education, and more. This is another attack by conservatives who want to censor through banning books in libraries. I'm proud of the work my library board and staff have done to support the community and bills like this will only hurt Iowans.

Name: Juli Redington

Comment: I am from Illinois but live here to be close to my children. I say no to your proposition. Stop doing stupid things like this that make the Iowa citizens want to leave Iowa. Libraries are a great way to increase knowledge, have meeting areas, and most importantly to start small children to love books and want to read.

Name: Susan Andersen

Comment: Another attempt to control public service. Do not pass this legislation.

Name: Christine Rogers

Comment: I in no way support this bill ssb3131! Local Libraries are a part of the community in which a person lives, has friends, raises families. It is imperative that each of us has the choice to be apart of this community. The library is a wonderful source to do that within, it is a safe place, a place where you can explore worlds upon worlds, research interests, reflect, study and there never pressure to buy, rent, sell, stay or go. Libraries promote trust and honesty, it aids in the teaching of our young and old to be respectful of property, to value the opportunity to borrow. To enjoy an array of periodicals from all kinds of perspectives. To take that away is dishonoring community of people, the tree, the writer, the time and creative energy, and the God given Right to us all to this sacred place we call a library. I am a proud library card holder of the Monroe, Iowa Library, where I am always greeted with appreciation and kindness. Please do not pass this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Lori Elbermawy

Comment: It saddens me that we are turning into a state where we have to battle and fight for all of the good things that we have done for education and our communities. Why are we turning our backs on all of the things that make Iowa a great state? We should be supporting and bolstering our efforts to get better, instead of focusing on what we can do to tear things apart.

Name: Tracy Weber

Comment: I am asking you to vote not to move forward with SSB 3131. The bill's provision to transfer library board assets to the city represents a potential misallocation of resources. Local library boards are best positioned to allocate funds, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed. This bill would also put additional responsibility and strain on our already over worked city councils. This bill is not needed. Please do not undermine Iowa's public libraries.

Name: Mary Winters

Comment: As a mother and an prolific users and supporter of public library, the fact that someone would even consider voting for SSB 3131. The library is a sanctuary for all, young and old. It is a place we can come for entertainment and enjoyment. It is a place that helps children and adults remember how important their imagination can be. It also plays such a vital role in ensuring people have access free internet to apply for jobs and services. A

Name: mary lynch

Comment: I oppose Senate Study Bill 3131. Please leave my local public library alone it is an irreplaceable asset for my community. This bill is a solution looking for a problem that does not exist in Iowa.

Name: Michele Patrick

Comment: Please reconsider this legislature. Library Trustees are civic minded leaders who are dedicated to their communities. They are appointed by the mayor, approved by the city council, and are entrusted by them to dedicate time and thoughtfulness into making wise decisions that fit their community. If a city council feels that isn't happening, the city council already has the power to make changes through the

appointment process. This bill isn't needed. I am also concerned about the adverse effects this bill could have on library finances. As it stands, a gift made in memory of a loved one will go towards a specific purpose. This bill would allow the city council to use that gift as they see fit. Once people learn that a gift given in honor of their mother may instead go to the electric bill, they will not give. Libraries depend on memorials and other gifts to enhance our collections and buildings.

Name: Anessa Olson

Comment: Libraries are essential to Iowa communities, providing access to education, art, and community engagement all free of charge to the public. Library boards are vital to governing the library in a way that is transparent, responsible, and focused on local needs and concerns. SSB 3131 threatens to siphon away the funds and expertise that keeps Iowa's libraries responsive and responsible to the communities they serve. Iowans deserve to have local control over their community libraries through their library boards. SSB 3131 will result in less responsive, less transparent library governance that will leave Iowa's communities all the poorer.

Name: Brianne Sanchez

Comment: I am writing to express my opposition to this bill. As a library foundation board member, parent, and patron, I feel if SSB 3131 were to be passed as proposed, it will greatly jeopardize future access to the free public services provided by our libraries. Instead of the tax levy funds and those who manage them being directed by the voting public, these services and their future will be put in the hands of local politicians. While some libraries may be protected, others most certainly will not. Perhaps worse, the funds of our tax levy will be subject to the financial health and competing priorities of a full city budget, which does not bode well for the critical and equitable services of our public libraries. Please consider voicing your support in opposition of this bill and join me in protecting libraries across the State of Iowa. Public Library Boards of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. Advancing this legislation would be a step back for communities at a time when libraries matter more than ever!

Name: Michelle Dickinson

Comment: Our family uses the library as our main source of education and entertainment. Whether it be books, (online, audio, or hardcover), storytimes, crafts, video games, movies, board games, a play area, activities such as laser tag (!!), our library provides it all. Without this important funding, these experience will cease to exist. With the cost of living on the rise, it is so crucial that these community hubs stay fully supported so that all may access to these services.

Name: Kathryn Schlott

Comment: Ive tried but still cant identify what problem is being addressed by SSB3131. Our libraries have functioned well and been enthusiastically supported for many years by their communities. They should continue as they are, a resource of knowledge, supported by taxes, governed by a library board, open to all, and entirely voluntary, where no one is ever forced to use the services provided. I strongly oppose passage of SSB 3131. Kathryn Schlott

Name: Emily Kinney

Comment: Im a public school teacher. I rely on libraries to help me supplement books and resources for my classroom. Many of the kindergarten students I teach get their first library card when the local librarians visit our school to teach about the wonders of the local library. Countless families I have worked with utilize the library in a variety of ways access to internet/computers, a safe place to spend time with their children, checking out books to help further their own education, the list goes on and on. It makes absolutely no sense that funding to such a vital part of the community would be taken away. Please reconsider this thoughtless legislation and continue to make access to libraries a priority in our community.

Name: Ann Sokolowski

Comment: I believe public libraries are one of the best institutions in our country. For many of us, the free public library was a gateway to the world, better education and a better life. That is no exaggeration. I think half of my childhood was spent at the Greenville Library in Sioux City. Libraries must be well funded. SSB 3131 puts that funding at risk. I urge you to oppose that bill.

Name: Bill Yount

Comment: I am writing as concerned Library board committee member. Our local library is used by many members of our community. We serve several young people who have no access to books, Internet access, or program's that the library offers. The local volunteer board offers direction to our library. Without the cities funding libraries would close or scale back their services. These are needed in our rural communities. I also use our local library and could not imagine having it. Please do not take away this funding for our libraries. I afraid that city councils would cut back services in the idea of an expense versus a need. As a Library Board Trustee, we look at best interests of the community. We watch our budgets and try to make the best decisions. Communities need our libraries. The City Councils have enough to do without the library decisions added onto them. Yours Sincerely, Bill Yount

Name: Cecelia Harmsen

Comment: I am asking you to oppose SSB 3131. Our Public Libraries provide many educational opportunities for all ages. From after school activities to exercise classes for mature patrons the library is a vibrant part of our communities. Our city and library boards financial responsibilities are taken very seriously and work very well together. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Linda Hunter

Comment: If SSB 3131 were to be passed as proposed, it will greatly jeopardize future access to the free public services provided by our libraries. Instead of the tax levy funds and those who manage them being directed by the voting public, these services and their future will be put in the hands of local politicians. While some libraries may be protected, others most certainly will not. Perhaps worse, the funds of our tax levy will be subject to the financial health and competing priorities of a full city budget, which does not bode well for the critical and equitable services of our public libraries. Please consider voicing your support in opposition of this bill and join me in protecting libraries across the State of Iowa.

Name: Siobhan Wood

Comment: As a retired teacher and an avid user of the local libraries, I oppose bill SSB 3131. Local libraries know what their patrons read and like, and they actively try to purchase books to give their readers what they want. Local town councils or the governing board will not care about the patrons, but the bottom line; money and control! Please do not vote for this bill! Save our local libraries from government control!

Name: Alissa Whitmore

Comment: Libraries are among the greatest resources we are. They are community oriented, governed by those committed to education and inspiring life long learning. Keep politics out of our libraries and let those with experience and training in education, open access to information, and censorship laws (in other words, librarians) govern these spaces.

Name: Penny Vossler

Comment: Another attack on local control? Where do these ideas come from? Our local public library is an excellent resource and much loved. Having our citizens involved in its

operation gives the community a sense of ownership and pride, leading to one of the best libraries in the state. The staff and volunteers are committed and know the needs of our community. This bill offers nothing to improve and much to worry about.

Name: Janice Dickerson

Comment: As a library board member, library user, school teacher librarian, I encourage you to vote NO on SSB 3131. The library is a welcoming, and wellused place in our city. It provides access to books, magazines, newspapers, other items (blood pressure monitors, computers, wifi, etc.) digital resources, and a wide array of inperson activities. Our library board has the best interests of ALL patrons in the city and county. Changing the overseeing of the library to the city administrator, city council and funding from the county and city is unnecessary. Please vote no for SBB3131!!!

Name: John Winke

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131 for several reasons. As suggested in the statement of the Iowa Library Association, this bill would undermine the autonomy of 500 public libraries statewide and limit their ability to tailor services and programs to meet local needs. Secondly, the bill places library funding in jeopardy by placing it in direct competition with other city services. This will most certainly diminish library funding over time. Most importantly, established library boards have spent years improving and maintaining the independence of libraries. This move is in opposition to the very nature of having independent public libraries that ensure the intellectual freedom of its users. Please do not forward this damaging proposed legislation.

Name: Dara Sanders

Comment: As the public library director in our small town, I vehemently oppose this bill. The harm this will do libraries is irreparable and reprehensible. I can only speak for my library but our statistics each year that we submit to the state have shown an increase in usage. Library visits increased with a 17% increase over the past year. Libraries are no longer just a place to check out books, but a place that offers a myriad of services to their patrons and communities. Our library works hard to provide a valuable free, service to all of our community, from the babies and preschoolers who attend our story times through the oldest of our citizens who attend our senior exercise and craft programs. Living in a world which increasingly relies on technology to navigate daily life, the library works hard to fill a void in this area both in the actual physical hardware/software, computers, printers, WiFi, etc. but also by providing the expertise by answering questions and providing guidance. Patrons with no WiFi at home or limited knowledge of technology, use the library to look for jobs where they can receive help navigating job applications and writing/uploading resumes. Computer usage at our library has increased by 68% over the past year. In addition, we have mobile WiFi hotspots that are available for checkout. Not to mention all the other services we offer including readers advisory services, online resources, an AWE Early Literacy Computer, special guest speakers, Geri Fit exercise programs, weekly mahjong games, monthly book club, early out childrens programming, summer reading programs, rotating mediums class, conference meeting space, genealogy room, and notary service. This bill makes me extremely sad for the future of not only our library, but our rural community.

Name: Marie Louise Kane

Comment: I am opposed to Bill SSB 3131. I see no benefit to it. Instead it will jeopardize the public's future access to the beneficial free services provided by our libraries. I am opposed to having local politicians involved in running our libraries and controlling library levy dollars. I strongly support our public libraries, run by competent professionals and engaged, knowledgeable boards. Politicians have other, serious issues to address, and have no business micromanaging public libraries.

Name: Catherine Petersen

Comment: Please vote NO to SB3131. The attack on local control is getting out of control, and the voters see what is happening. Iowa libraries are not a problem to be fixed instead, this bill creates problems and introduces politics into an apolitical system that is meant to serve everyone in their local communities. SB3131 is unnecessary, an overreach, and is irresponsible at the state level. The legislature needs to start focusing on problems that actually exist instead of trying to make them up and stir up discord. Leave our libraries out of the political dysfunction that is systemic in Iowa right now.

Name: Malavika Shrikhande

Comment: I strongly oppose Bill SSB 3131. I was in awe when I got my first public library card and was able to check out books, audio books, and go in for events they organized. And all for FREE ! I come from a place where there are no public libraries but a different model of service. Public libraries provide free access to a wide range of information resources, organize literacy programs, story hours, events to encourage reading from an early age, serve as community hubs, bringing people together for various activities and events. They host book clubs, lectures, workshops, and cultural programs, fostering a sense of community and providing a space for social interaction. They offer access to computers and the internet, helping individuals who may not have these resources at home to develop digital literacy skills. There is so much more. This legislation would eliminate the required levy of 6 cents for public libraries and instead make that levy optional. There would be no required funding for public libraries in the state of Iowa. I have proudly served as a trustee the last 8 years. A library board member is an advocate for the library and its mission. Library boards understand the unique needs of their communities and work tirelessly to support and promote library services. The board members participate in continuing education to ensure the library is meeting the needs of the community. They are members of the community they serve who volunteer their time for the service of their library and their community. Let us not forget the Library Bill of Rights was written by an Iowan, <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/TB/961350.pdf>. The American Library Association adopted the Library Bill of Rights and still applies these basic principles today.

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Name: Christina Grier

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131 as it undermines and threatens the operational and financial sustainability of our community libraries. As a Board of Trustee for over eight years, I have seen firsthand the successful collaboration between library director/staff, Board of Trustees, City Administrator and City Council. In our ongoing collaboration, our library continues to grow and serve our town and surrounding rural area. We serve our patrons and our community in numerous ways, contributing positively to quality of life by providing access to resources, technology, and gathering spaces. The Library Board operates without a political agenda, focused on what is best for our community and how our library can serve even better. As members of the community, library boards understand the unique needs of their communities, and then works to meet those needs through library services. Our volunteer board is well trained, with ongoing continuing education, an onboarding process for new trustees, a yearly calendar which allows us to review policy regularly, and monthly updates from the library director. This legislation does not benefit public libraries, therefore does not benefit the citizens of Iowa.

Name: Jen Koch

Comment: Please reconsider this bill. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. As an Iowan and an Iowan voter for over two decades, I deeply value my public library and the free services and opportunities it offers me and my fellow citizens. The services my local library offers are critical to support Burlington and its people at all levels of income and accessibility. If we lose funding for our library, it will deepen the wealth and education disparity that's already troubling our state. Don't do this. We don't need this and we don't want it.

Name: Janene Krug

Comment: I am FULLY AGAINST SSB 3131. As a lifelong library user and now rural library director I see the great value libraries bring to our communities. Iowa libraries are vibrant thriving spaces where people can access information, services, and materials. This bill jeopardizes the rural and city funding needed to provide these services to our citizens. Libraries provide engaging educational programs for early and lifelong learners, access to technology, material collections and workforce development resources. Without funding, Iowa citizens will lose free access to these services. This bill also and takes away autonomy from library board members. Library board members are the voice of the community and are appointed by the mayor. Library trustees participate in regular training to become knowledgeable about library principles. They are dedicated volunteer citizens who strive to create effective partnerships with city council and the communities they serve. Library board members focus on library matters, allows the city representatives to be able to focus their time and energy on other pressing city issues confident that the needs of the community are being met. This legislation will be devastating to our libraries and the Iowans who rely on library services and programming. Please stop the advancement of this bill.

Name: Victoria Riley

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131 that would provide a mechanism for cities to defund their public libraries. A free public library is a critical part of acclimating new Iowans to our communities. A bill that opens the door to defunding libraries and taking away the control of library trustees is not an attempt to lower property taxes, but a thinly veiled attempt to keep new Iowans at a distance. Some people, including myself, call that racism.

Name: Andi McCurdy-Savago

Comment: Others have expressed their concerns about this bill better than I could. I encourage

our trusted, elected officials, who have the best for Iowa in mind, to read those concerns and vote down SSB 3131.

Name: Connie Hockett

Comment: I am opposed to SSB 3131I just read the book "What you are looking for is in the Library" by Michiko Aoyama. This fictional book shows how people come to the library looking for something particular and stumble across another book that changes their life. Libraries need autonomy. (Ironically, I stumbled across this very book while looking for something else.)

Name: Rev Rich Hendricks

Comment: NO! This is bad public policy and governmental over reach. Please keep our libraries independent. Thank you.

Name: Anne Skaden

Comment: I oppose Senate Study Bill 3131 for so many reasons but my main question is, WHY?Why is this deemed necessary? What does it improve? Library boards are strictly volunteer entities, they cost no money. Our library is losing 12% of the library's budget because of the state stopping a levy approved by voters many years ago. Library operations and services heavily rely on levies as well as volunteer Iowans appointed by elected bodies to represent, serve, and support the mission of their library. This proposal changes all that. I am all for collaboration between library boards and local authorities in order to work things out, but this bill doesn't allow for that. Why not? It comes across as a huge distrust of libraries. Thanks to my parents, I've used and worked in libraries my entire life. They are an important part of the community that is working for everyone. It doesn't matter who.

Name: Kayla Thompson

Comment: Libraries are not just places to borrow books. Access to information, resources, and a sense of community is a right of every person regardless of financial standing or status. Libraries provide that and any loss of funding is egregious. Keep our communities strong and let the people library.

Name: Renate Bernstein

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131 and see no benefit to Iowa from this proposal. As a retired citizen and an avid library user, I am very concerned that this proposal will strip local libraries of autonomy. Libraries provide immensely important services and are used by all ages, including my millennial children. We need to ensure board members are able to make the best decisions for all members of their communities. SSB 3131 needs to be dismissed.

Name: Maitreyi Shrikhande

Comment: As a college student raised in Iowa and a lifelong library patron, I am saying "NO" to SSB 3131. Each library is a pillar of its community, and it is held up by the unique needs and individuals that it serves. Taking away the local control from our libraries removes power from the very people who reap the libraries' benefits the citizens. Allow libraries to be resources for our communities, and please focus on other issues.

Name: Jeanne O'Fallon

Comment: If SSB 3131 were to be passed as proposed, it will greatly jeopardize future access to the free public services provided by our libraries. Instead of the tax levy funds and those who manage them being directed by the voting public, these services and their future will be put in the hands of local politicians. While some libraries may be protected, others most certainly will not. Perhaps worse, the funds of our tax levy will be subject to the financial health and competing priorities of a full city budget, which does not bode well for the critical and equitable services of our public

libraries. Please consider voicing your support in opposition of this bill and join me in protecting libraries across the State of Iowa.

Name: Nancy Dodge

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131. This bill jeopardizes library funding which is already facing large cuts due to other legislation. The library is a major asset to any community. It is a resource the entire community has access to providing more than just books to read. Boards of Trustees do a successful job monitoring and governing existing libraries. They listen to the community, they work for the community. Libraries like ours rely on city and county funding. Without this support there will be closures of libraries. We must keep this city and county funding and allow Boards of Trustees to move forward. Please DO NOT move forward with SSB 3131.

Name: Alison Ames Galstad

Comment: The Public Library Board is one of the best examples of citizen involvement in governance. Public Library Boards are crucial in providing independent guidance for Libraries, and at their best insure that Libraries remain apolitical, providing a wide range of resources and services for all individuals in the community. This legislation threatens that independent oversight, and the integrity of the public library system in Iowa. I urge you to leave SSB 3131 behind and move on to other substantive and meaningful legislation.

Name: Stephanie Jones

Comment: As shown by the amount of comments opposing this bill, the citizens of Iowa do NOT want this bill passed. Listen to those you are supposed to represent and stop this nonsense that will cease the available access of information. Libraries do not need restructured. Listen to the people and vote against SSB 3131.

Name: Dana Slotter

Comment: As a lifelong library lover, I am opposed to this bill. I do not see any benefit to the public for this legislation and only harm for these essential public services. All Iowans deserve access to these vibrant community resources.

Name: Kristin Stuchis

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. I wonder, why change something that is working? The libraries in Iowa are vibrant community resources that foster lifelong learning. I grew up in Iowa and often visited our public library. As a child and young adult, I enjoyed following my curiosity and learning about the world, inspiring people, and answers to my questions. I learned as a foreign exchange student, however, not to take public libraries for granted. In Vallenar, Chile, we did not have textbooks at school and when I wanted to review material, I was surprised to find out that libraries were private in my town. My host family did not have a library and books were expensive. I realized that I would be limited had I grown up in a community without access to a library. By leaving Iowa, I realized that access to information and resources in our public library system is an essential piece to the American Dream. My family and my students regularly use and are inspired by the Marshalltown library. We also enjoy the libraries when we visit Decorah, Grinnell, Ames, Iowa City, and Urbandale. I have been impressed with each and appreciate their local flare. Iowa's libraries are vibrant community assets responsive to their communities because they are run by library boards who are committed to the people they serve. I'm really disappointed in my home state. Growing up, I was proud of Iowa. I thought Iowa valued education and community. Moving back 6 years ago from Minnesota has been hard. I have noticed division and dismantling things that were so important to me growing up. The public libraries have truly been an oasis. Please table SSB 3131 and put your energy in areas that need fixing, rather than trying to weaken thriving community assets.

Name: James Wooley

Comment: My goodness, what is wrong with you people in the Legislature of late? I am writing to oppose SSB 3131, which is a very thinly veiled attempt to control both the concepts and content of libraries, politicize these institutions, and in many cases eliminate them altogether. I write as a former Library Board Member (Chariton, 5 years), and a lifelong user of libraries. Small town libraries, with the helpful suggestions of library staffers, expanded my horizons as a very young child, and helped set me on a path to a career in science later in life. These places of free education helped define the young lives and later careers of our son and daughter, and now that of our grandchildren. We feel so strongly about the value this institution provides to our community that we contribute a significant sum annually so that more audio and written resources can be provided by our local library (because libraries, as you well know, are not adequately funded anywhere in this state). SSB 3131 jeopardizes library funding by eliminating the required library levy. It places every library in Iowa at risk, particularly in the case of rural, smalltown libraries. It allows elected officials (without ANY library training) to alter a library board and even eliminate it, effectively politicizing decisions about the library collections, programs, and policies thereby removing the public's voice in these institutions. This bill poses a significant threat to intellectual freedom and access to information. Please do not advance this bill.

Name: Cara Stone

Comment: Im writing as a resident of Ames, IA in opposition of SSB 3131 which impacts Iowa's public libraries. Local library boards are best positioned to oversee funds judiciously, ensuring libraries are able to use the resources to serve the children, families, and other members of their communities. Libraries are integral to community literacy programs, serving homeschooling families, bridging the summer gap for public school students with summer reading programs, helping citizens seek out and attain employment, and helping communities come together for book clubs and other activities. Library board oversight is essential and board members are trained, trusted, and equipped to oversee these programs and judiciously allocate library funding. Please stop SSB 3131.

Name: Jennifer Stumpff

Comment: Public Libraries are the backbone of our community. They are a great public good and deserve the support of the state. I am writing in COMPLETE opposition of SSB 3131. This power grab and attempt at censorship MUST be blocked.

Name: Marlo Buzzell

Comment: "A healthy democracy demands an informed, engaged and empowered public where all citizens freely have access to information, and a forum to explore and discuss ideas with a community of neighbors. Libraries are our institution dedicated to doing just that. If they disappear, then what?" (Ariel AbergRiger, "A History of the American Public Library" 2019)SSB 3131 is an unnecessary, undemocratic proposal as well as a further embarrassment for the state of Iowa which used to be a proud leader in public education.

Name: Shelli Blazic

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131 and the removal of local control of library boards from cities. I understand that local library boards receive no payment and the local community incurs no cost to support library boards.

Name: Mike Redington

Comment: I'm an adult and I have free access to basically whatever I want from an information stand point. I don't need to rely on the library however I still so strongly oppose this bill. The access to free library services is a foundation of this country. Access to information is one of the key tenants of democracy. Defunding libraries is an attack on access to information and is undemocratic and unAmerican.

Name: Kara Hafez

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131, as it jeopardizes the autonomy of public libraries in Iowa. I was born and raised in Iowa and had the joy of taking my children to the same library where I studied while getting my degree at the University of Iowa. This proposed legislation would result in the immediate loss of levy dollars and put at risk the very essence of community and the necessary transparency that fosters this community.

Name: Tina Whalen

Comment: I am in opposition to SSB 3131, the bill relating to public libraries. The library provides essential community resources that foster education, intellectual growth and community engagement. The needs of each library are dependent of the community it is housed in. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131 undermines the democratic principles behind local control and puts needed services in jeopardy. The bill's provision to transfer library board assets to the city is just down right wrong. I encourage you to explore alternative solutions that promote collaboration between library boards and local authorities while preserving the autonomy necessary for effective community service.

Name: Melody Dworak

Comment: If I could add a photo here, I'd show the one where a children's librarian read a board book to my child when he was one month old. He's had a library card since then, and for 8 years he's been reading library books and growing his literacy skills, surpassing his grade level. Disclaimer: I am a public librarian and I loathe the political game this legislature is playing. Here are some real stories of what I do at my job: 1) Help nonEnglish speakers apply for jobs to get off unemployment. 2) Help first generation college students navigate their Kirkwood apps to submit their homework so they can learn a trade. 3) Assist seniors with navigating their new technology so they can stay in touch with their grandkids. This is what you want to take away? You want to take away preschool storytimes and senior tech help, summer reading programs and safe spaces for teens? Keep the shall and ditch the may. Ditch this bill entirely while you are at it.

Name: Rhonda Sheeley

Comment: My family strongly objects to this bill. Public libraries strengthen the communities in Iowa and serve varied populations of all ages as they seek information, education, and recreation in order to improve their quality of life. The appointed Boards and Directors respond to client requests and expand access to resources far outside the local area this is especially true for medium to small rural communities. All of the many Iowa communities I have been part of have depended on strong libraries even in the tiny towns as they continue to lose other Main Street businesses. Citizens in Iowa NEED their libraries to be funded in a consistent manner and governed by the appointed Boards who have the best interests of their patrons and their communities at heart. Young families in particular value libraries and as Iowa seeks to attract and retain these families for our current and future workforce continued funding and support is paramount. Businesses looking to locate in an area often examine the community vibrancy libraries contribute to this big picture. Do not advance this bill.

Name: Evy Raes

Comment: As the daughter of a woman who helped establish a library in the small town of Slater, I oppose this bill. This bill is pushed forward by those who fear information and diverse opinions to make the world smaller for those who wish to explore it. I do not wish to tell anyone which books they may read and I do not wish anyone to tell me which books I may read. A library is more than just books, it is community, education opportunities, and a social hub. To remove independent boards and to limit funding is not just the death of a small town library, but also the death of those above mentioned things.

Name: Bob Gilbertson

Comment: This bill will impact the effectiveness and possibly the existence of public libraries. Cities and counties would no longer have the funding that is directed for libraries and could spend it in the way they seem fit. Stable sources of funding would no longer exist, and many of our libraries would lose the ability to provide valuable services and resources to the public. This bill will provide our elected officials the ability to do away with library boards; those same boards who have autonomy deliberately to avoid being used in the political games that are becoming commonplace. There are many benefits to governance by a group of invested community members. They steer our libraries with knowledge and passion, and we would lose the voice of these people. This bill will undermine the ability of public libraries to do their job, to education, engage, nurture and provide for their communities. Everyone, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or political party, can use their local public library. That is why we need to fight this bill!

Name: Brittany Jacobs

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 3131. Not only to library boards draw a much more diversified group of people than do city council elections, creating a governing board that is more likely to represent the community as a whole, but the power for councils to remove a board with a mere ordinance strips the community of their say in the matter. The mission of the Burlington Public Library is to create opportunities for all people to connect with others, to learn about the world around them, and to imagine the futures before them and from strategic planning to helping shape library policy, our board of trustees play an integral role in realizing that mission for our community. To remove the referendum to change library governance, coupled with removing the mandate to levy for a library are strikes two and three (see HF 718 for #1) against public libraries in Iowa, and further erode our democratic processes. Let the people library!

Name: Ruth Hardin

Comment: I object to SSB 3131. This is unnecessary when cities already have the power to appoint library boards. This legislation would have a chilling effect on intellectual freedom and the rights of Iowans to have independent public libraries open to all, regardless of political affiliation or belief. I urge you stop this from moving forward.

Name: Jean Kaul-Brown

Comment: Just say no SSB 3131, an unnecessary and unwanted bill that would take power away from communities to govern themselves. Our libraries and their boards are doing just fine. Our communities deserve thriving libraries that serve everyone. If passed, expect to see fewer resources in the hands of everyday Iowans, and hollowed communities that have lost their heart their libraries. What is the point of this bill? What issue does it solve? Who wants this bill? Not the everyday Iowans who patronize our libraries. I urge you to vote no, and keep this bill from advancing out of subcommittee.

Name: Erin Rush

Comment: I am an Iowa library director. Libraries are informational centers and social hubs. Iowa has large pockets of rural areas that depend on services that libraries and trained library professionals provide. Right now city councils appoint board members and approve total funds. What would change is that more effort would be put on our elected officials who are already struggling to keep up with changes the state has made. The loss of mandatory funding and a mandatory board will mean a loss of resources for our communities. This will also politicize spaces that until now, were the last free spaces left in Iowa where people could exist and improve themselves. Moving forward with this bill and hindering libraries shows failure of care and respect for the human rights Iowans deserve and have had until now.

Name: Grace DeGreif

Comment: This bill is fucking stupid. Be a decent human and vote no.

Name: Susan Fink

Comment: As a patron of the library and former member of the Board of Trustees it is very upsetting to hear of the bill that is being brought forth in the Iowa Legislature. The Libraries are run by people who are looking to help all patrons. Our library and I am sure many other libraries are serving people of all age as, cultures and socioeconomic groups. The Board of Trustees listen to the people they serve and look at what policies are best for their own libraries. The levee that was passed here in Marshalltown was widely accepted by the public. The City Councils have so many duties to perform and many of the councilors are not even patrons of the library. Are they the best to make policy for the library? I think they are not. You are putting so much stress on library staff who may have to cut hours because of the laws that have been put into place. Our library was finally able to be open 7 days a week and now will the council come up with the funds to replace the levee money so they can continue the excellent service they provide. I think you should reconsider taking this bill forward please for the many library patrons around the state of Iowa.

Name: Jennifer McMillan

Comment: As a library trustee, I echo the ILAs statement that libraries are essential community resources and our library boards are uniquely positioned to help support the library and the community at large. A strong community starts with a strong library. SSB 3131 undermines the strength of our libraries and our communities.

Name: Nancy Pins

Comment: I oppose this bill. Libraries are for the entire community and I am able make correct choices of materials for myself. I do not need the government making more choices for me. Thank you.

Name: JOANN SADLER

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. Public libraries need local control to ensure they are meeting the needs of the community they serve. They also operate on an extremely tight budget and do not need any further restrictions in funds. I am an avid library patron and I feel libraries are a wonderful asset that is open to all of our citizens.

Name: Jerri Heid

Comment: I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed change to transfer the public library's governing board decision making for funding libraries to city council control. In my opinion, such a shift poses significant risks to the core values and functions that libraries fulfill within their unique communities. Libraries play a crucial role in fostering responsible free thinking and promoting critical information literacy. They are not merely warehouses of popular books but are essential institutions that contribute to the intellectual and cultural growth of individuals creating an educated and responsible citizens. Besides offering resources that not all can afford, libraries serve as vital resources for early literacy development, providing books representing the diversity of the world and a variety of free programming for families and adults, offering support to the area's homeless populations, assisting in the social emotional needs of our children and families, and providing valuable assistance for those in need of job application support, and the list could go on. Making this change, as we have already seen challenged or occur in other communities in our state (Perry) and across the country (Florida and Texas) shift priorities away from the specific needs of the community, redirecting focus towards political considerations rather than the genuine welfare of the people, who many are vulnerable populations and those who aren't always able to voice their needs. Libraries should be governed by individuals who have the best interests of the community at heart and have the closest knowledge of what is actually happening in

their community library, ensuring that the services they provide align with the unique needs of those who need and use their libraries. Libraries and librarians are not just the keeper of books, they are crucial in helping individuals navigate the complexities of our online world, teaching our children and adults to verify sources of information while directing them to a variety of sources to do so, and promoting responsible online behavior. These are essential skills in today's digital age so misinformation does not overshadow the truth. Independent governing boards have a better pulse to the evolving needs of their community rather than central control. A library's role in supporting education and intellectual growth should not be subject to political maneuvering but rather driven by a commitment to fostering a love of learning and knowledge.

Name: LORI CARNES

Comment: I am writing in regards to SB3131, imploring you to reconsider this legislation. I am a board member and avid library user. Cutting funding to public libraries and moving the decision making to city councils is counter productive. Libraries provide many much needed services to their communities. Board members have a vested interest and understanding of the needs of the library and the citizens that use them. City councils already have many things that they are responsible for and do not have the time that would be needed to make informed decisions regarding the needs of a library.

Name: Carroll Nelson

Comment: I absolutely object to SSB 3131. The library is one of my favorite places to spend a few minutes or a few hours off my free time. I remember always going to the library when I was growing up. I love reading and I contribute that love to my mom and the time we spent in the library. Reading fostered my love of learning. I am proud my taxes go to helping to fund this experience for a new child yearning to learn. The library board is there for a reason and their responsibilities should not be pushed upon our already busy city governments.

Name: Ali Iserman

Comment: I strongly oppose SB 3131. Taking away the autonomy of library boards would be detrimental to Iowas libraries. The mayor and city councils do not have the time or resources to take on the added responsibilities that come with overseeing the library. This feels like another attack on libraries and intellectual freedom. Look at all of these comments, people not only support and adore their libraries, they rely on them. Iowans deserve better. No to SB 3131.

Name: Marie Larchick

Comment: I object to SSB 3131 and ask that you stop its progress. Our Public Library boards provide more than adequate transparency and oversight to the vase array of services provided by our public libraries. For any Iowa community to lose access to the public library in their town is unconscionable and would be a determent to the citizens. Public Libraries deserve to be a top priority for city and county funding. Do better for Iowa families and provide more support for public libraries. Thank you

Name: Bruce McKee

Comment: I am opposed to SSB3131. It serves no purpose to support and enhance our community libraries. Libraries serve vital role in our community to enrich, inform and educate citizens of all ages and walks of life, and in so many cases the only access to books, electronic resources and enrichment programs. Dont do anything to mess with libraries and the systems that are in place.

Name: Tara Turner

Comment: As an individual, a mother, and library director I object to SSB 3131. Funding of local libraries is one of the best investments any city can make for the continued

success of its community. Changing the law to make levy funding 'optional' would damage all Iowa communities, but would be especially devastating to our rural communities. Independence of a library board from local government control is essential to freedom of information and access to it. I ask the committee to please reconsider these changes and instead direct their efforts to helping local governments better recognize and support libraries as key parts of their community's infrastructure.

Name: Diane Panfil

Comment: As a current Library Director, former Library Board Trustee, and lifetime library user, I am strongly opposed to SSB 3131. Such a drastic measure threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Local library boards are dedicated, trained volunteers who are best positioned to allocate funds, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed and will best serve their communities. While our current City Council is very supportive of our library, that may not always be the case. And I can guarantee that they do not need, or want, the added responsibility of monitoring the daytoday operations of running a library. Our local library offers services to those in our community (approximately 1500 residents), surrounding communities, and surrounding rural areas. Libraries provide access to information, technology, entertainment, and cultural enrichment. Libraries are way more than just books. They have become community centers and are often a vital part of smaller communities. Our library offers a variety of programs for adults and children of all ages. In the past 2 years we have had over 10,500 attendees at free programs! Not bad for a small town! If this bill moves forward, Iowans lose, and no one wins. Please stop bill SSB 3131 from moving forward.

Name: Katherine Styr

Comment: This bill is a waste of time and disrespectful to our library boards. Libraries are a crucial resource in our communities. We love our Davenport libraries from attending kids' activities, to checking our movies, games, and books, to reading ebooks. This bill is an attack on library funding and should not be passed.

Name: Caciona Bernstrom

Comment: I'm writing to demand that this bill be abandoned and the capitalist profiteers be shamed. How dare you steal from every other Iowan who uses libraries for education, for support and for the life saving resource of access to knowledge. Shame on anyone who wants this bill. When other countries describe Americans as willfully ignorant arrogant and selfish, look at this bill. Throw this bill in the garbage where it belongs and try to be better humans

Name: Kim Engelstad

Comment: Please oppose this bill! Libraries are the cornerstone of the community. They provide equitable access to resources. Libraries foster education. As a child, I remember going to my local library weekly to check out books! This was always the highlight of my week. As an adult, I continue to use the library for its resources and community events. Libraries should maintain local control as each library board knows what's in its community needs.

Name: Christian Wolone

Comment: I am a citizen and a taxpayer I demand that my elected officials do not pass this bill. We need more libraries and more funding for them, not to reduce access but to expand it

Name: Valerie Giegerich

Comment: I am writing to let you know what a value public libraries under local control are to communities. Public libraries provide essential services to all community members. Each library board deserves the autonomy to focus on the services unique to each

community. For example, all libraries provide childrens programming for free, however some communities need more childrens programming than others. Some need more services and collections for older adults.

Name: Judy Porter

Comment: Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, we'll lose their library levy dollars which we need. We need to access the free public service from appointed board members. Let the people who use the libraries have local control of their libraries. Please stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries. Thank you!

Name: Rochelle Brody

Comment: Our Des Moines libraries provide free of cost most valuable resources to all area citizens. For this system to lose its transparency, control and those free services is a travesty to our community. Please discontinue this unnecessary legislative process.

Name: Carole Cherne

Comment: SSB 3131 is extremely dangerous, curtailing one of our most precious freedoms, the freedoms, to read what we want to read, and thereby, to learn what we want to learn. Politicians have no right to decide what I, or anyone is allowed to read. Libraries and library boards must remain independent and separate from state or federal purview. Don't drag Iowa back to the days of book bans and forbidding African Americans from learning to read!

Name: Kayleigh Septer

Comment: Please reconsider this. This bill would be detrimental to our public libraries and the communities they serve. Like others have said before me, city councils created library boards to run libraries for a reason. I am appalled that this is even being considered.

Name: Lindsay Schmitt

Comment: We love our libraries! I have two grandsons. One is 30, one is 15 and by the time they were three we went to the library weekly! I myself would get books as well! They loved the experience, it got them motivated to read and learn about everything! From dogs to history to our planets and our earth, they learned and took that information to school when they started! Our freedom to learn many things cannot be taken away! Now I have a great granddaughter and I look forward to taking her as well. Thank you!

Name: Devin Redmond

Comment: I am against SSB 3131. Libraries build community.

Name: Leslie Lewis

Comment: SSB 3131 is nothing less than an attack on Iowans, our intellectual freedom, and our communities. It will have a crippling effect on the very hubs of our communities by taking away patronbased boards and replacing them with political and socioeconomic driven agendas. I adamantly oppose SSB 3131!

Name: Monique Shore

Comment: I am writing in opposition to SSB 3131. The current structure, which would be destroyed by this bill, ensures that communities have local governance over what happens with their tax dollars. The appointed Library Board of Trustees understand the unique needs of their communities and the existing structure in place for decades! ensures that there is accountability and responsiveness within the community. The proposed structure would threaten the operational sustainability of libraries across the state. This bill will also undermine and diminish the funding available to libraries, one of the few remaining resources for community members of

all age, ability, and socioeconomic status.

Name: Danielle Swink

Comment: This bill is unnecessary and will have adverse affects on our libraries. The autonomy of library boards to make decisions regarding this public space needs to be kept intact as the board members are ones who understand the value and benefit of libraries as an important part of a thriving community. Placing this responsibility on a city council will subject the library to the decisions of people who often do not see the value in libraries and are often either negligent in the decision making or outright hostile. We have seen this play out already in local circumstances. Again, I urge the subcommittee to shelve this bill.

Name: Elizabeth Jones

Comment: Please reconsider this bill. It would directly harm libraries and their visitors. Libraries are essential places of learning and community. Exerting this level of control over libraries would be devastating for the freedom of information and speech necessary for a democracy. The people deserve to read and learn and connect without harmful limitations.

Name: Celia Hadden

Comment: I am vehemently against SSB3131. Please dont pass this bill, which will harm our communities and our state.

Name: Larassa Kabel

Comment: I'm writing out of concern for the ridiculous bill SSB 3131 introduced by Jesse Green to strip Iowa public library boards of their authority, to transfer board assets to the city, and to immediately eliminate the library levies. It feels like the Republicans have squandered their majority powers to make life worse and worse for Iowans. This state is starting to feel like a backwater hellscape instead of the lovely place I moved to 28 years ago! There is so much work to be done, and instead Jesse Green and the rest of our legislature is looking to disenfranchise our public library system which is a gem of our culture and an organizational system that does so much heavy lifting for our communities! Really?! Fix the potholes, get the homeless people off the streets and figure out how we are going to take care of people in need! Those are the things we are paying for not this BS political culture war stunt. I am so sick of this current government I can hardly bear to hear what my state is doing.

Name: Amy Pothoven

Comment: Thank you for your service on the subcommittee. This new bill SSB 3131 2024 has moved in under the radar rapidly, which in it of itself gives me pause. As you know, Jesse Green has introduced this bill to strip Iowa public library boards of their authority, to transfer board assets to the city, and to immediately eliminate the library levies. Public Library Boards of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. Ask your representatives to stop this legislative overreach shadowing our libraries. This will not make the work of city management easier. It will foist off specialized training, focus, time, attention, and advocacy given to libraries through their Boards of Trustees to city staff with fewer resources than ever before. Small, rural libraries may have to close. We've fought this battle (and won) at the local level in Pella already. Government can only be FOR the people when it is OF the people and BY the people. Please STOP SSB3131. The majority of Iowans don't want this. For an additional perspective, this may be helpful
https://rleonard.substack.com/p/iowarepublicanlegislatorsarecoming?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&fbclid=IwAR2FsIP3OKmBan2VQI6y9gLie98nrk5uHRtSLiQm6GNHVRB9EOxcweO3WA

Name: Sonja Carmon

Comment: I live in the small town of Cambridge Iowa. I have been a library patron for many years and value what our small Library gives to our community. Please leave the library system as it is so we can further encourage reading and educate our youth through books and programs. Reading continues to keep our adult patrons engaged, and entertained through reading and programs as well.

Name: Reba Gaughan

Comment: To our Senators and Representatives in Iowa,I just read about Senate Study Bill 3131, I am 77 years old and my life has always evolved around a library, my mother encouraged me to read and learn and the library was a place where I could find books and it was free and I could spend hours and I still do, I read, go to book club and exercise class there and all for free, I spend time with friends and they have craft classes and free computers for people and especially for children. Please do not dummy down people by taking away their books and other activities which my library and other libraries offer to people. We need our libraries in a time when the economy is bad and people need somewhere they know they can go for free and enjoy their books, DVDs, audio books, programming, book talks, etc. all for free. Libraries are free to everyone, because they are supported by tax payers dollars, taking away that tax payer support will literary shut down many libraries. Please consider not passing a bill that would do this. Thank you. Reba Gaughan

Name: Cindy Duhrkopf

Comment: Shock is what I am in! Libraries are the one entity in some of our small rural communities that are holding the community together and now we want to dismantle them? I would like to invite Senator Green to visit the Churdan Library and see what that library does for the community. This is just one example of a library being the living room for a community. I work in the world of early childhood and often the library is the only place a young parent can safely take a child to learn so many social skills let alone the gateway to lifereading. Small community or large. Please do not let this bill go any further.

Name: Benjamin Rothman

Comment: This measure is truly asinine. You first neuter the funding of public libraries and now want to give them to city councils that dont want or have time for the responsibility. Your sound bite of the week claims it is for the good of the community and ensuring the libraries reflect the community standards what standards?All you are doing with this is signing a death sentence for small community libraries across the state. As it is most are barely scraping along budgetarily year after year, and by removing the Library Levy you have already exacerbated this problem. Putting libraries in the hands of politicians who dont have the time or bandwidth to handle another thing is just going to ensure that libraries begin closing. Or worse, they will stay open but only provide a severely limited and approved point of view belonging to the politicians now running it. If you havent read Farenheight 451 yet, i highly recommend you get yourself to one of the currently working libraries and give it a read. Remembering while you do, its a cautionary tale. Not a how to manual. (Which is exactly how too many people are treating it,)This measure shouldnt even be up for actual consideration much less discussion. It is a blatant move towards censorship that should have all of you screaming that it borders on unconstitutional.The fact it doesnt has me frightened for the state of out political system. You should be ashamed of yourselves for this even getting this far.

Name: Suanne Adams Willman

Comment: I oppose the proposed legislation SSB 3131 and ask that the committee reconsider the implications of the bill. Local libraries need their own board and decision making needs to remain with library professionals. Libraries are public spaces. As a library patron I should be able to freely choose what I want to read. Libraries provide a

service to the community in many ways. A library board understands the purpose, the usage and the patrons of their local libraries and control needs to remain with the local community members who value their local library and volunteer their time to serve on their local library board. City councils have other concerns and priorities. There is no need to change the current structure of public libraries.

Name: Kathy Miller

Comment: Do not pass SB 3131. I am very opposed to this bill. I am a frequent user of the library. In addition to having access to reading material, I do research, genealogy, attend educational programs, use computers, and have access to free WiFi. I do not support removing authority from the dedicated library boards or jeopardizing library funding by putting authority into the hands of politicians. Public libraries are an integral part of our community. The library offers materials, services, education and programs that would not otherwise be available to most people.

Name: Jacynthia West

Comment: As a lifelong Iowan and library user since birth, I oppose SSB3131. Libraries truly serve every part of the community, every age, background, and income level. Besides books, libraries provide access to necessary online resources, social connection, lifelong learning, business development, shelter, and many more services. This bill will severely undercut those resources and take decision making away from dedicated Boards of fellow community members across the state. Doing so will greatly affect efficiency and further remove the community's voice from library decisions.

Name: Carol Sommer

Comment: I am a frequent user of the public libraries for books, DVDs, childrens' books, and sometimes computers. I strongly object to politicians who come and go and have NO library experience inserting themselves into the library business whether it's holdings or activities. In this country people have been free to select their sources of information at public libraries, and this should remain the case. The state legislature has neither qualifications nor need to involve itself in our great public libraries.

Name: Mary Dooley

Comment: I join all those who oppose SSB 3131. This has severe negative ramifications for Iowas small towns like Albion, population under 500, who depend on willing volunteers. Volunteers started our library after our school closed in the 80s, and for years our library was in the two bays of the old fire station. I was on the library board when, with dedicated volunteers and the support of our small town, we raised more than \$500,000 to build a new library. Were not a rich community, and the town would never have had the money to do that, given all the other demands on its budget. Neither would any of the elected councils that weve had over the years have had the time nor expertise to oversee the daytoday operations of a busy, growing library. Its now truly the hub of the community with books, movies, computers and activities for all, and thats a vital role for small town libraries. Our town is proud of our library and voted several years ago for an additional tax so the town could fund the library a little better. But in HF718 this year the state legislature took away that right! Why?? That made it harder for our city council with an alreadystrapped budget and now this bill would make their jobs even harder. It attempts to politicize an entity that is absolutely apolitical. The current system works well. Please give this bill the sudden death it deserves.

Name: Sara Skinner

Comment: Please continue to fund the libraries with the current levies. Libraries are vital to the well being of communities.

Name: Dennis Platt

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131. It seems to be another effort by the state legislature to strip local

citizens of local control. Last year legislation passed to remove local tax authority to support their local public library. Defending public schools and public libraries is very destructive to family and community life. Cutting state income taxes more deeply for the rich and powerful in this state is not worth the results of becoming the next Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi.

Name: Brenda Schumann

Comment: What has happened to Republicans favoring local control? Is there really a problem with public libraries as they are operated now? Why not work on real problems such as water quality?

Name: Vanessa Doden

Comment: Libraries are important resources for every community especially small rural towns across this state. Growing up in the VERY small town of Fertile, it didn't have much but for all ages the library was a vital part of our lives. Summer reading programs for kids, internet access for those who didn't have it at home, being able to check out books, and other media like movies and audiobooks, events and fundraisers to bring everyone in town together. Whether you live in a small town of 300 or a large city, libraries give EVERYONE access to these services or enjoyment. Changing anything about levies would deny funds to communities who really need these resources, especially small rural ones. Please don't vote in favor of changing any funding or taking authority away from local boards. City Libraries Boards know what they need and denying them their authority is also denying citizens of their libraries and the essential resources they provide.

Name: Sylvia Roba

Comment: Please reconsider putting forth this legislation. Library board trustees are dedicated community members who provide a great deal of free service to the community as board members. What problem is this legislation trying to fix? If passed this bill would potentially gut libraries which are the most egalitarian and welcoming organization in any community. They are essential to the functioning of a civilized society.

Name: Melita Tunnickliff

Comment: The changes being proposed would potentially weaken public libraries in many Iowa Communities. Our early legislators saw the importance of libraries to our state, especially to small and rural communities, which is why they wrote that each city and county "shall" levy a tax to support a library, not "may" levy a tax. With this bill the State would be indicating that libraries are an unnecessary, optional amenity, rather than the heart of a community and a support for our democracy. Giving access to information and ideas, open to all, is the mission of libraries. Library Boards are made up of citizen volunteers who dedicate themselves to learning the aspects of library policies and procedures through training sessions, reading, and discussion. Library Board meetings are open to the public and responsive to the citizens. There is no need to weaken or transfer what authority Library Boards have.

Name: Ken and Sandy Kline

Comment: Please STOP SSB 3131. The Public Library is an invaluable resource in our community. We strongly support funding and continued local control of our public libraries for all Iowans.

Name: Sheila Olson

Comment: I've worked in libraries in the metro area for the past 11 years. I see first hand each day the influence that these libraries have. I also grew up as a child in Iowa and was heavily influenced by libraries. The public library has always been a safe space where I was supported in pursuing my interests, both in reading materials and the free programs that they offered. This bill would be detrimental to many libraries in the area, especially small libraries. Libraries are meant to be a place for everyone in the

community to have access to not only books, but resources that will help them to pursue their dreams and things they are passionate about, regardless of their economic state. Defunding them will impact the community as a whole in a very negative way. The library boards spend time getting to know the library and its purpose in each individual community. This is something that many city council members do not do, and probably don't have time to do. I can say for certain that some city council members have never even set foot in their public library. Please stop action on this bill. It is short sighted and, honestly, it feels very totalitarian.

Name: Rachel Evans

Comment: I've been a library fan my whole life. Libraries are vital to Iowans in finding information and having enriched lives. Library boards are important advocates in our communities. Don't take their influence away and threaten the levy dollars. Vote "no" for SSB 3131.

Name: Jane Robinette

Comment: I love my public library. I support my local library board. These board members are the ones with the knowledge and experience and mission to oversee our library. SSB3131 threatens the independence of the library board, immediately ends levy funding, and transfers assets to the city. What could possibly go wrong? Public libraries serve their communities in so many ways. This bill puts those services at risk. Given the legislature's attacks on school libraries and school librarians, we should be very skeptical of the reasons given for this bill's unnecessary and unwise changes to community libraries. Do not pass SSB3131.

Name: Wendi Peterson

Comment: Please reconsider this bill. Libraries are vital to ALL communities. Libraies provide the opportunity for all to continue learning.

Name: Brittany Burkard

Comment: I oppose this bill. The library should be in the hands of those who have a passion for it. One of the biggest things I missed about Iowa when my family was traveling around the country was our wonderful libraries. They are already in good hands and tailored to their local communities. This bill would harm communities as well as the ability of libraries to provide important services to anyone in those communities regardless of background.

Name: Ashley Lisowski

Comment: I am strongly against SSB 3131. Our libraries are a very important public service. So many families rely on them for more than just books and many can't afford to continuously pay for the books and thr services provided. City council doesn't need the extra burden and aren't educated the same as library boards are to best run our public libraries. Stop playing politics with necessary public services. This bill does not serve the people of Iowa and is just another political talking point that hurts our individual freedoms.

Name: Sally Weyer

Comment: I write in opposition to SSB3131. I have been a regular public library user throughout my life. The very first public library I ever went to was in the fire station in our town. I was so excited to get my first library card there as a small child. I felt incredible joy and wonder to discover that I could pick out and take books home with me. I feel that same joy to this day when I use the library. The public library is a place where everyone in the community can discover that wonder and joy. The library is quite often the heart of a community but I fear that SSB3131 would put a dagger through that heart.

Name: Anne Marie Gruber

Comment: Please stop SSB 3131. The continued gutting of public library funding in Iowa is shameful. Public libraries support both our rural and urban residents through literacy resources, workforce development programs, entrepreneurial tools and technologies, free meeting spaces, even mental health services, and much more. There are very few public services that have such a strong ROI incredible value for a small investment. The funding change proposed by this bill would jeopardize funding for library services that are vital to Iowa's individuals and communities. Independent library boards are vital to ensure transparency and thoughtful oversight. City councils don't need more on their plates and do not have the expertise necessary to manage a public library in addition to their existing duties.

Name: Niki Smith

Comment: I oppose SSB 3131. The foundation of America is based on our freedoms for ALL people. Libraries are built for ALL Americans. First, you took our freedom to read with SF 436. This bill would take funding next. The proposed legislation not only threatens the integrity of public library governance but also jeopardizes the vital funding that sustains our libraries and their invaluable services.

Name: Laura Portier-LaLumiere

Comment: Please DO NOT move forward with SSB 3131. This bill will hurt our public libraries, which are a valuable resource for every family in every community in Iowa. If this bill passes, a community would not have to fund their Library at all. It would put public libraries at risk of becoming a target of those with a political agenda and thereby put resources that our communities count on at risk, too. Libraries are so much more than all the amazing books they hold they are a place to build community, a place for people to learn new skills, a place to access to technology for those who don't have it at home, safe places for children, and so much more. Please don't put any of that at risk by supporting SSB 3131.

Name: Valli Ruggiero

Comment: Libraries serve all community members in a variety of ways ranging from reading materials to public meeting spaces and are centers of local activity. Local libraries in Iowa are governed by Library boards composed of community members and allow for direct community input. Library Boards are a shining example of vibrant community focused democracy in action. Iowa Senate Study Bill 3131 removes library boards from the governance of local libraries and transfers that responsibility to cities. It is a move away from community participation and small government. Local libraries are community places and should be governed by community library boards.

Name: Sonja Scott

Comment: Please reconsider Senate Study Bill 3131 as it will have a negative effect on the residents of Iowa. We need our volunteer Board of Trustees rather than City Council members making decisions regarding our Public Libraries. Our local libraries are the hub of our small communities offering a huge array of services to our families including child development craft and game programs, Teen games and crafts, adult exercise and craft programs and guest speakers on a variety of educational subjects. All of this promotes socialization and community. Nothing else in our community is open to all residents like our library is. Other services include computer use, printing, faxing, notary, homework help, job resume assistance and more. All residents should be able to access our libraries as they are and as they continue to grow as they are structured currently.

Name: JoAnn Miller

Comment: Why is this bill even being considered? As a retiree, I use my library weekly not just for books but also as a meeting place, attending educational sessions, getting assistance with researching answers. This is the one place I can do all of this at no

direct cost to me. Yes, I understand I am funding through a levy but I am thrilled everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status has access to all of this knowledge and community spirit. Please Toss the bill out!

Name: Chelsea Toppin

Comment: As an Iowa citizen and avid library goer, I oppose SSB 3131. Do not allow this to move forward for the sake of all Iowans.

Name: Jon Krieg

Comment: As an avid, lifelong reader, I strongly oppose this bill. Libraries should remain under local control.

Name: Thomas Hollander

Comment: The simple answer to SSB 3131 is a no vote. As a former library board member I have a pretty good idea what would happen to library funding if it was optional for cities and counties to fund the libraries. The same could be true if the cities took ownership of the property and the ongoing maintenance and upkeep. City councils will talk about the value of a library in a community but are not willing to pay the staff salaries that are comparable to other city employees. A library clerk is a \$12.00 per hour job when mowing golf courses is \$15.00 per hour job. A library needs a professional staff to run and maintain along with an independent board.

Name: Carol Burns

Comment: I have lived in Davenport since 1973 , actively using the public library to enrich .the lives of my 4 children . They are all grown adults who use the library for their own children. Please continue support the library for the many others who use this service,especially those who have few alternatives for their needs. The library gives us our best bang for the buck!!

Name: A Miller

Comment: The library is one of the most valuable resources to any community. They provide so much more than the items available in their catalog. They help provide so many services to their community, most of which are at no cost to their patrons. This bill would make libraries vulnerable to increased loss of funding, and a loss of funding to a library is a loss to the community it serves. Libraries provide safe spaces for kids, meeting spaces for organizations, Internet access for the public, including those that may not be able to afford it, Maker Spaces for the community to use, and generally a place in the community for everyone who chooses to use it. I strongly oppose this bill

Name: Anne McCullough Kelly

Comment: I am gravely concerned about the potential impact of SSB3131 on the quality of our public library resources in Pella. By changing the language of the funding mandate, municipal governments will have far too much flexibility regarding providing appropriate funding for libraries. Municipal governments could even be punitive in cuts to library funding. I completely disapprove of giving city councils the power to change the administrative responsibilities of the library board of trustees by ordinance, as that gives voters in the community little to no say in the changes that take place. Ordinances are fine for issues such as parking, signage, noise levels, etc. but not to regulate a public resource whose services protect a persons right to freedom of access to information as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. I also disapprove of removing the 4year prohibition on attempts to make changes to library board governance; this opens the field for libraries to be under near constant attack from individuals and organizations determined to impose their values on the content of the librarys collection. Library staff and patrons do not need to work and try to enjoy library resources under this kind of horrible pressure. In my town, we endured 18 months of nasty, cruel insults and the spread of misinformation and plain lies about the library, library employees,

and the library board of trustees leading up to the defeat of a resolution that would have crippled our library board. Quality public libraries offer a diverse range of materials to respond to diverse interests and needs in communities. Legislation such as SSB3131 risks turning a public resource (something we ALL pay for via taxes) into a private free bookstore that's curated based on a limited range of values and that is NOT the purpose of a public library.

Name: Michelle Burns

Comment: As a citizen of Iowa City which holds one of the most popular public libraries in the state I ask that the library board remain intact and continue to manage its wonderful offerings to our community. Why are you addressing a problem that doesn't exist? If it's not broke, DON'T FIX IT!

Name: Donna Jones

Comment: I have served on our local Board of Trustees for a number of years. This proposed bill is not helpful to any Iowa library. The Board of Trustees & Directors of each IA library know their library and community needs and work together to make their library a place to serve all of the community, even reaching out to smaller towns around to supply library needs to them as well. We don't need this bill at all. Please reconsider and understand libraries don't need the govt involved in decision making at our Public Libraries that serve all Iowans. Thank you

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Name: Katherine Riley Harrington

Comment: I am writing to oppose the advancement of SSB3131. Public Library Board of Trustees provide focus, transparency, and broader representation to the process. With SSB 3131, Iowans will immediately lose their library levy dollars. Iowans will lose access to free public service from appointed board members. Iowans will lose local control of their libraries. As an avid library patron, this proposed consolidation of power is yet another example of this Legislature trying to undermine the concept of local control. Please do not pass SSB 3131. This is not in the best interests of our communities and libraries do not benefit from a one size fits all approach. Katherine Riley Harrington

Name: Angie Fleenor

Comment: Please stop this bill! The city is the ones who appoints the library board so they are entrusting that the board does what is needed to be done for the library. They do not need added responsibility or fully understand what the library needs are. That is what the library board is for. This bill will just destroy libraries and close some small town ones.

Name: Pam Anderson

Comment: My opinion is local libraries need to have a library board to make decisions for their local library. Our library is more than checking out books. Our board along with our librarian has implemented programs for all ages (toddlers to senior citizens). The programs are a variety of interest and aid to all that participate. The board members are volunteers that take necessary time to continue keeping our library up to date and informational. I do not think the bill Ssb3131 will be of advantage to our city or library.

Name: Erin Goddard

Comment: As a patron of my community library, my family and I use and take advantage of this public service. This proposed legislation, to say the least, undermines the level of work the library has done and continually does on a daily effort. The invested members of the library board deserve so much more than this political move. Knowledge is not to be controlled, but I understand money can only be stretched so far. I see that the parttime librarians doing fulltime work. I see how the library acts as also a community center, looking over children and aiding the elderly. A city council could not ever be expected to fill the shoes of library board, nor should the be allowed to assume the control of the library board. As it is with no SSB3131 changes, the unseen impacts and responsibilities of a library go beyond what is given to them already. Do not take away the minimum that is supporting them.

Name: Sue Ellen Beek

Comment: One purpose of a library board is to protect libraries from political influence and protect intellectual freedoms. Our libraries were given this protection in Iowa code 392.5.

Name: Shanell Wagler

Comment: I am requesting that SSB 3131 not move forward. Library boards provide a valuable service for what materials and services are provided in libraries and the levy to support libraries is a solid method for financial support. I see individuals from all walks of life and all age groups utilize services in our local library. I feel this bill would be a disservice to Iowans.

Name: Linda McDermott

Comment: As a long time library patron I oppose SSB 3131. Libraries are most important to all Iowa communities in so many ways. They provide services and information for all people. This bill if passed could destroy the financial and operational benefits for all the Iowa libraries. Consider how this would affect all the people in the State of Iowa. Please stop Bill SSB 3131 from moving forward. Thank you.

Name: Karen Stalter

Comment: No No No to SSB 3131. City councils are not interested in another task. They appoint the members of the Library Board to oversee the Library. As a Library Board member for over 6 years, I have always felt the support of our city Mayor and councilthey are trusting us. And lets leave it that way.

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Name: Dory Briles

Comment: There is not a need for SSB 3131 as Iowas public libraries are doing an outstanding job of serving their communities. Local boards and library staff keep our public libraries dynamic and responsive to community needs. Iowas public libraries strengthen our communities and transform lives every day. A 21st century public library is so much more than books. The public library offers innovative programs, connects patrons to technology, and advances knowledge. Public libraries are the great equalizer. People of all ages, backgrounds and needs connect with one another, learn new things, explore new interests, get started on the path to new careers and so much more by using library resources.Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development, the 2007 Urban Libraries Council,

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation report, described a shift in the role of public libraries from recreational reading and research institutions to active economic development agents, addressing issues of literacy, workforce training, small business vitality and community quality of life. In Des Moines, the six DMPL locations are thriving as community hubs where people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds prepare for career and personal success. In a 2020 City of Des Moines Satisfaction Survey, residents gave the public library a 91 percent satisfaction rate, far exceeding local and national benchmarks. Please stop SSB 3131 an illadvised and unnecessary action.

Name: Jeri Messenger

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. There is not one good reason for the local library board to not continue to make the best decisions possible for their local library. Why is this even a proposed bill? Stop the madness of this legislative session.

Name: Sherri Logan

Comment: I beg you to reconsider this bill. Our family has used the libraries in all the communities we have lived in. We have joined reading groups, after school groups, used for research, made friends, made readers out of our children and grandchildren. They were able to find and explore books, music, etc. that all were interested in at that time of their lives. This over reach will dismantle the Public Libraries that we know and use. No board should ever be for a political agenda but for the good of the communities they serve. It is a thinly veiled attempt at control over what publications are available to all people. Let the people choose what they want to read.

Name: Karen Bergan

Comment: Senate Study Bill #3131 is not a good plan for our state. The bill would not make anything better or easier with regard to governing the library. The bill would not make anything better or easier with regard to the services the library provides to the community. The funding formula for libraries needs to be (at the very least) maintained, NOT reduced. Tax dollars help municipalities offer services that benefit all citizens who could not provide such services very effectively themselves. As I see it, the public library is one of those services. Let's not find ourselves in a year (or two or five or ten) wondering what happened to the wonderful libraries we USED to have!

Name: Kara Schneider

Comment: I object to SSB 3131. Listen to your constituents and stop this bill from moving forward. There is no need to take away another public resource that is vital to our state. This legislation is another example of taking away intellectual freedom and the rights of Iowa citizens to vote and support their institutions. Iowans love their libraries as they are. Leave them alone!

Name: Nancy Geiger

Comment: This sounds like politicians are preparing to blackmail public libraries into not providing access to information that school libraries have already been banned from providing access to. Is it your goal to do away with access to information to citizens may use to make an informed decision like the governor and legislature is already doing by banning reporters from access and ignoring Freedom of Information filings. Is it your intention to turn Iowa and America into a theocracy? Iowa used to be progressive, caring and educated. What kind of Iowa are you trying to create? do you want a new slogan "Iowa Dumb, ignorant and mean"? We are departing from the Iowa I grew up in. The Iowa I was proud of. the Iowa that was part of the democracy. the Iowa that followed separation of church and state. The Iowa that didn't Steal my tax dollars to pay for Catholic schools that parents that wanted a religious education for their children were already paying for rather than forcing me to pay for it while you continue to attack public education and public schools access

Name: Jessica Delp

Comment: I am writing as a mom, library patron, and social worker. I think that giving cities the ability to manage all library funds at their discretion alone is a dangerous road. Libraries are one of the last remaining free, public places open to all. When compared with a parks and recreation department, for example, we do not bring in income. You can use our facilities and our programming regardless of socioeconomic status, unlike parks and rec. where a person often has to pay to play on teams, use pools, etc. Libraries have stayed a more open place to all for usage and programming but that also means that libraries do not have as much capital to bring to the table as they don't collect much for fees and programs for people to access and enjoy the library. It feels like in limiting the public library board's oversight and transferring most of it to the city, that it would be easy for the departments that bring in more money (by charging people to use their facilities and be a part of their programs) to have priority when there is limited funding in a city. It doesn't seem like a stretch for the library (as one that doesn't offer what some would consider an "essential" service or a public safety like police/fire) to be the first on the chopping block when cutting funds. Public library board oversight allows many different members of a community (usually these boards are fairly diverse and not necessarily affiliated with local politics) to have influence and management of their own library. When we were deciding on which community to move to several years ago, a flourishing library was a strong consideration in choosing where we would live. Unlike businesses, a library is a place you can enter and stay without spending any money. They are often a vital hub of the community, especially in rural Iowa. Providing safe, educational, and usually free programs for adults, families, and children within their communities. Libraries not only provide books and information, but also a space where community is encouraged to gather. Like a public park, they are open to all regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or religious affiliation. As a young mom, the library is where I made my first friends when moving to a new city in Iowa. Due to our everchanging seasons, the library has been a consistent place where I can take my children during the long winter months/rainy/sweltering days and build community indoors in a place where I don't have to pay. In many ways, the library is our third place. We have home, church, school, and the library. My library also offers free space for various entities to meet. There is a once a month homeschool gathering that is open to all. There is also a twice a month, senior group that meets here after our community senior center was disbanded a few years ago. Their use of this room is completely free and stands as one of the last few indoor, public places where people can gather for free or very little money. Our senior center and our community center are nonexistent in our community. These activities have been moved to the library. I think that having a local group of diverse members of the community with no ties to the city is a better way to manage the activities and direction of the library versus leaving it all to the sole discretion of City Management. It is best for them to work alongside each other then to eliminate the current checks and balances that we have.

Name: Lori Walton

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB3131. Please reconsider this unnecessary legislation. Libraries are a great place for people and ideas to come together. Public library board members provide the leadership necessary for this to take place. Please support our local libraries by voting against this bill.

Name: Trever Jayne

Comment: This bill is an affront to local control and takes the expertise provided to libraries by their dedicated board members and pushes so many process and procedures into the hands of city staff, with no clear indication of how this would work. It jeopardizes library funding and could negatively impact statewide services such as eBooks through Libby, InterLibrary Loan, and Open Access services. Please do not allow this bill to move forward.



Iowa Library Association Statement on SSB 3131

The Iowa Library Association (ILA) vehemently opposes Senate Study Bill 3131, which, if passed, will significantly undermine the autonomy of over 500 public library boards across the state. The proposed legislation not only threatens the integrity of public library governance but also jeopardizes the vital funding that sustains our libraries and their invaluable services.

Libraries are essential community resources that play a crucial role in fostering education, intellectual growth, and community engagement. The strength of our libraries lies in the local governance provided by dedicated library boards, whose members understand the unique needs and aspirations of their communities. Stripping library boards of their powers, as proposed in SSB 3131, undermines the democratic principles that guide local decision-making and diminishes the ability of these boards to tailor services to the specific needs of their communities.

Furthermore, the bill's provision to transfer library board assets to the city represents a potential misallocation of resources. Local library boards are best positioned to allocate funds judiciously, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed. A centralized approach may lead to inefficiencies, diminished accountability, and a lack of responsiveness to the diverse needs of individual communities.

Such a drastic measure threatens the operational and financial sustainability of communities and their libraries. Library operations and services heavily rely on levies as well as volunteer lowans appointed by elected bodies to represent, serve, and support the mission of their library. Libraries are cornerstones of education, providing free access to information, technology, and cultural enrichment. Diminishing public access to the process of policy development, library funding, and information access advocacy jeopardizes the very existence of these institutions, undermining their ability to serve as essential community hubs.

ILA asks all lowans to oppose SSB 3131. ILA encourages the exploration of alternative solutions that promote collaboration between library boards and local authorities while preserving the autonomy necessary for effective community service. Our libraries are irreplaceable assets, and it is crucial that we protect their ability to thrive for the benefit of current and future generations.

1 February 2024