



LEADING THE WAY
SINCE 1875

March 4, 2023

Dear Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Slap, Representative Morrin Bello, Senator Samson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and Members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee:

As you know, legislation in the form of H.B. No. 6829 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIOBOOK LICENSING has been introduced pursuant to obtaining fair terms and fair pricing for electronic content for libraries – eBooks, downloadable audiobooks, and more. Writing on behalf of the **785 members of the Connecticut Library Association**, I support this effort.

Consumers pay, on average, \$12.77 for eBooks from retailers like Amazon. The average cost for a public library for the exact same product is \$45.75. Authors get no added royalties or income from these sales.

The cost differential for e-audio books is even more egregious given the initial high costs. Consumers of e-audio pay, on average, \$27.28. Libraries pay \$69.76. Again, this is for the exact same product.

Also, whereas an end consumer can retain their copy of such material indefinitely if they choose to do so, the vast majority of licenses available to libraries from these publishers force a time limit of two years or of 26 circulations, whichever comes first. Libraries are thus forced to buy the materials - at the same extortionate pricing or more - yet again.

Often, the more popular the author (e.g., James Patterson, Stephen King, etc.), the greater the price differential. The ultimate responsibility of these costs are taxpayers at the local level.

It is very important to note that this legislation has **nothing to do with copyright**, it is a matter of contract law. In the same way that taxpayer funds are treated preferentially with all other state contracts – from floor wax to vehicles to road salt – the same should be true for electronic content.

Libraries are not looking to deny publishers profits, only the opportunity to negotiate a fair price on behalf of the taxpayers asked to foot the bill. Libraries are perfectly willing to pay fair prices for these products. The pricing structure that exists, however, is not fair.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Douglas Lord

President
Connecticut Library Association