



2026.18

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE FRONTLINE STAFF OF THE TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC) expresses support for the staff of public, school, academic, and special libraries in the United States and the essential services those libraries provide to communities, recognizing the need for funding commensurate with the broad scope of social service and community supports provided by libraries, preserving the right of all citizens of the United States to freely access information and resources in their communities, supporting a strong union voice for library workers, and defending the civil rights of library staff.

WHEREAS, library staff are cornerstones of their communities in the United States, providing visitors with access to books and media, delivering high-quality programming to visitors of all ages, ensuring equitable internet access for all, and linking people to crucial information about accessing social services; and,

WHEREAS, libraries are an economic powerhouse in their communities, providing resources to small business owners, job seekers, and individuals learning new skills; and,

WHEREAS, in recent years, library staff have been called on to address the fallout from difficult public crises in the United States, taking on roles that exceed the traditional role of providing a space for, and access to, educational and cultural enrichment; and,

WHEREAS, the health and survival of democracy in the United States requires that everyone be able to exercise rights to information and services, and it is especially important for young people to have the opportunity to learn, encounter, and debate all manner of ideas, including controversial ones; and,

WHEREAS, students have been shown to spend more time reading and exhibit higher reading scores when given access to diverse titles, and library staff play a crucial role in curating diverse book offerings for young readers; and,

WHEREAS, a fundamental responsibility of the job of library staff is making decisions about the books and media in their collections and assisting visitors in accessing those materials

without fear of censorship or reprisal for fulfilling the role of providing information and resources to the public; and,

WHEREAS, public libraries are essential community institutions that provide free and equal access to information, technology, educational programming, and civic gathering space; and,

WHEREAS, public libraries often serve as the only location where residents can access reliable internet or use a computer to apply for employment or complete government forms; and,

WHEREAS, the Timberland Regional Library (TRL) system serves residents across Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston Counties through 29 branch libraries, and has done so for nearly sixty years as one of Washington State's original intercounty library districts; and,

WHEREAS, the frontline staff of TRL, who greet patrons, answer questions, run programs, and keep our branches open, are vital community connection points between TRL and its patrons; and,

WHEREAS, public library systems across Washington State face serious structural funding challenges, underscoring the need for sound financial stewardship, transparent governance, and proper oversight of public funds at every level; and,

WHEREAS, the strength of a public library system is measured not by the size or salary of its administration but by the quality of services delivered to the public by the workers who staff our branches every day; now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the WSLC hereby affirms its support for public libraries as essential community institutions and recognizes the vital role the Timberland Regional Library system plays in the civic, educational, and economic life of our region; and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the WSLC recognizes and honors the frontline staff of the TRL and all public library systems for their dedicated service to our communities, and affirms that the preservation of frontline library positions and public-facing services must be of high priority in any budgetary decision; and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the WSLC calls upon the TRL Board of Trustees and all other public library district oversight bodies to ensure that public funds entrusted to the library system are managed with full transparency, proper oversight, and a clear commitment to prioritizing the services and workers that the public depends on; and be it finally,

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Washington State Library, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees International, the American Library Association, and all Washington State elected leaders.