Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Napoli, and members of the General Obligation Bonding Subcommittee. I am State Librarian Deborah Schander. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and update you on the State Library's three proposed and existing projects.

**Proposed: Renovation of Middletown Library Service Center**
The State Library's Division of Library Development provides leadership, funding, education, and statewide services that enhance a local library's ability to deliver high-quality library service to their community. The 10,000 sqft Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC) was built in the 1960s and is a critical location for Statewide Library Services servicing public, school, and academic libraries. It houses the CT Digital Library, the Connecticut Library for Accessible Books, subject matter experts for all statewide library programs and projects, and the Statewide Technology Training Center. But the MLSC needs to re-purpose and redefine used and unused space to accommodate new technology and the increasing demand for training in the computer lab and in the meeting room. Due to lack of adequate space, staff is often forced to turn away librarians who wish to participate in workshops and library groups who request meeting room space. Thanks in part to the State Library's Construction Grants to Public Libraries, libraries of all types are renovating and updating their own spaces to meet the evolving needs of their patrons. The State Library must be able to match their commitment to new ways of learning, teaching, and discovery by providing them with a modern, technologically advanced space in which they can build their knowledge and skills.

The proposed allocation of $400,000 in FY24 and $355,000 in FY25 would allow the State Library to make priority renovations to MLSC, including:
- **HVAC:** The existing original HVAC system is extremely energy inefficient comprised of a central heating system, partial central air (training lab), and the remainder of the rooms cooled by window AC units. Climate control is inconsistent throughout the building. Most notably, during the summer months the main part of the building which houses the main lobby, stacks, and access to all offices and program rooms is not cooled at all. High temperature and humidity have a detrimental effect on books. MLSC will install an environmental control system that allows for real-time control of HVAC and lighting systems throughout the building.

- **Doors:** Replace egress doors in computer lab and meeting room. The doors currently installed are not insulated, and the glass is not thermo pane. They are the original doors and are responsible for considerable energy loss. The doors in the meeting room were not configured to be true exit doors, and therefore do not lock properly, nor are they ADA compliant.
- **Electrical:** Rewire and install floor or ceiling outlets and ports to compensate for multiple computers and other technology. Allow for expansion of technology and the need for additional grounded outlets. Evaluate all in-building wiring and network connections to ensure that they conform to the latest applicable standards and are in synch with space reconfigurations.
- **Restrooms:** The men's and women's restrooms are original 1960's construction fixtures. We propose expanding the women's restroom by eliminating the men's restroom and including an ADA stall. Touchless, efficient fixtures and touchless stalls should be installed.

In addition, MLSC intends to reconfigure the main Stack Area/flooring. This means removing 60-75% of redundant shelving (mass weeding of redundant collections) and creation of modular sitting areas; reconfigured professional development collection space and other specialized collection areas to be retained. The space could then be used for larger interactive programming and workshops as well as smaller meeting areas for professional librarians to use.

**Construction Grants to Public Libraries**
Per CGS §11-24c, the State Library provides grants to public libraries for construction projects that create or improve usable space. These grants allow public libraries to not only improve aging infrastructure, general deterioration, and meet ADA compliance needs but also respond to increasing need for flexible collaboration spaces to meet community use. All Connecticut public libraries are eligible for these grants and preference is given to libraries in distressed municipalities and to principal public libraries. Grants can provide up to ½ the total cost of a project (capped at $1 million), and libraries must raise the remaining funds through referendum, fundraising, donations, municipal capital projects, or other methods. Depending on the type of grant given, libraries have either one or three years after State Library Board approval to secure this funding. There is one statutory grant cycle per fiscal year, with applications due by September 1.

Currently, approximately $8.7 million has been authorized for use under this program but has not been allocated to public libraries. Five projects (totaling nearly $1.7 million) have been approved by the State Library Board and are obtaining local funding; allocated funding must remain intact for these communities as they work to raise funds. The State Library anticipates

7-8 applications in FY24 and 5-7 applications in FY25, including at least five $1 million grant projects.

**Shared Library Preservation Facility**
The State Library has been approved for $10.264 million for a new library preservation facility. This facility would allow the State Library to partner with public higher education libraries in Connecticut to:
1) Consolidate resources, significantly reduce duplication of holdings, and provide a centralized facility that preserves the state's long-term investment in valuable but less frequently used materials, and
2) Repurpose existing library spaces and transform them into engaging environments for research, scholarship, study, and learning.

This project is in the early planning stage. No funds have been obligated or expended yet, but we anticipate use of the full approved amount in the next several years.