REGIONAL SYSTEMS AT RISK IN CALIFORNIA

California's public librarians are concerned that if Gov. Jerry Brown's budget proposal to eliminate all state funding for public libraries were to pass, that it could grievously harm a subtle but vital ecosystem that underpins statewide library collaboration. And they are planning a grassroots campaign to change the governor's mind.

Brown's proposal would eliminate funding for the Public Library Fund (PLF), the California Library Literacy and English Acquisition Service, and the California Library Services Act (CLSA). All told, $30.4 million.

Within the CLSA are the state's eight Cooperative Library Systems, as well as Transaction-Based Reimbursement (TBR), which together provide the infrastructure and the funding mechanism that permit the state's public libraries to provide services such as interlibrary loan (ILL) or reference across jurisdictions.

Librarians fear this 30-year-old resource-sharing network could collapse without money from the CLSA.

"I think there's a public policy argument for some state support for resource sharing," Jane Light, director of the San José Public Library, told LJ. "People use it very heavily.... It allows us to continue this tradition of sharing, and if that all goes away then it's possible the local jurisdictions will say our funding does not allow us to serve nonresidents, and that would be a huge step backward."

TEXAS STATE BUDGET DRAFT DECRYED BY LIBRARIANS

The first draft of the state budget submitted to the Texas House on January 18 proposes cutting state funding for local library aid and resource sharing programs essentially to zero.

The Senate and Gov. Rick Perry (R) have yet to weigh in on the two-year spending plan prepared for the House by the Legislative Budget Board, but librarians across the state were not expecting them to move the needle much past zero for the major programs, and the proposal has left them stunned.

"We knew it was going to be a tough battle—it always is—but this is just completely shocking," Maribel Castro, president of the Texas Library Association (TLA), told LJ. "We anticipated we'd lose some leverage, but to come out and basically eliminate the three areas that make up the infrastructure for libraries in the state of Texas—I will not deny there were tears in my eyes," she said.

The proposed budget would eliminate:

- direct aid grants to public libraries statewide by reducing the Loan Star Libraries program's funding from $16.2 million in FY10/11 to $100,000 in FY12/13;
- all state funding for TexShare, a collaboration established in the early 1980s among public and academic libraries administered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission that provides access at a reduced price to...