

President's Message continued from page1...

- Unnecessary and excessive renovations to the President/CEO's office space, such as an outside smoking deck and executive conference rooms;
- Creation of new administrative positions with salaries over \$100,000;
- Permitting the President/CEO to work a part-time position at the Elmont School District; and
- Hiring an Elmont School District employee for library construction projects, creating a possible conflict of interest.
- Adopting a policy that eliminates or monitors outside employment of key library staff;
- Establishing a policy requiring Board approval for hiring and compensating key library managerial employees;
- Monitoring of contracted-out services;
- Revising the library's Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Having labor representatives on the Board of Trustees; and
- Giving ex-officio Board of Trustees the right to vote.

Local 1321 members, library customers, and the services to library users are continually compromised by the trustees and President/CEO's actions. Most importantly, the Queens Library is losing the trust and support of private and public funders. This is of grave concern to Local 1321 members. We are encouraged by the proposals put forth by Queens Borough President Melinda Katz and Public Advocate Letitia James, which include:

- Establishing an Audit Committee;
- Abolishing the Administrative Committee;
- Mandatory annual financial disclosure statements from the Executive Director and other key library employees whose compensation is funded by city or state tax dollars;

These have been difficult times for everyone involved with the Queens Library. We need to work diligently with our elected officials and any library trustee to enact these proposals.

These first steps will add transparency and accountability to the library's operations, restoring the trust of the library's employees, customers and funders. Your hard work and dedication to the Queens Library will continue to make the Queens Library the best in the world.

In solidarity,
John Hyslop
President

Queens Library Guild
Local 1321 News
DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
125 Barclay Street, New York, NY 10007



QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD

LOCAL 1321 NEWS

DISTRICT COUNCIL 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO,
125 Barclay Street New York, NY 10007 • (212) 815.1188 • SPRING 2014 Vol. 11, No. 1

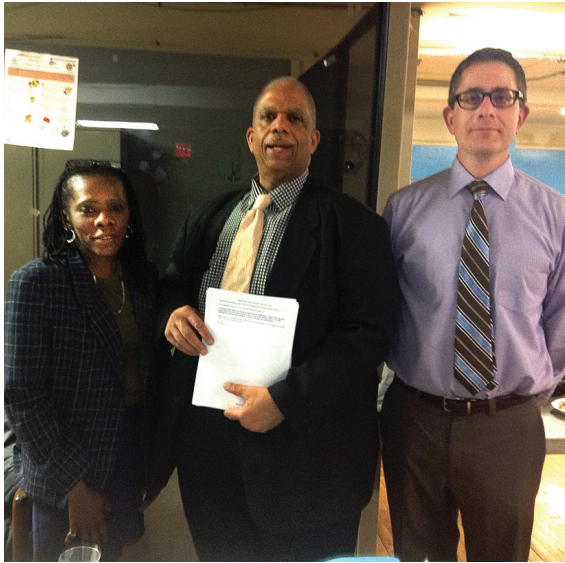
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President's Message:
*Regaining the Public's Trust
at the Queens Library*



From left, Vice President Margaret Gibson, City Council member Leroy Comrie and President John Hyslop.

NEW YORK CITY'S taxpayers understand the dedication, time and commitment the Queens Library's Board of Trustees makes to the Queens Library and to our community. We have entrusted them to be stewards of the library, ensuring that our tax dollars are spent wisely while bringing excellent services to millions of library customers. We have given them a great responsibility.

After the recent revelations documented by the New York Daily News, Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 members question the Board of Trustees' ability to guide our library and make proper decisions.

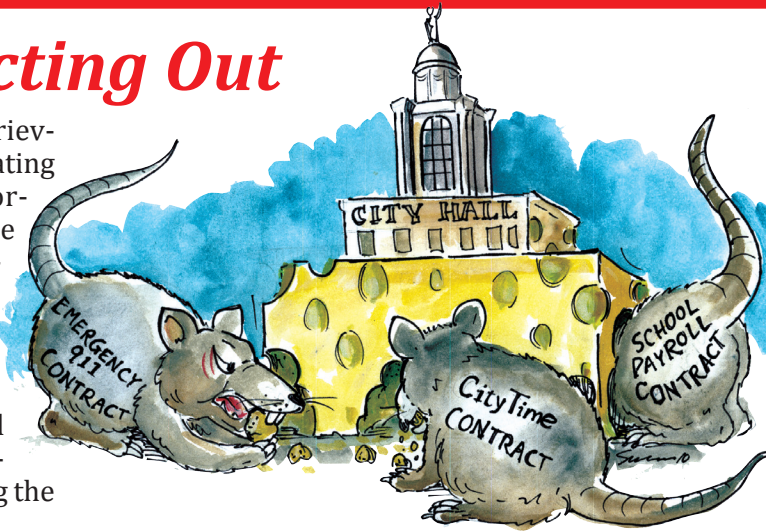
- Local 1321's 728 members, who for the most part serve the public directly – librarians, clerks, custodians, computer technicians, maintainers, drivers, adult learner teachers – have had serious concerns about the trustees' and the administration's decision-making for years. This Board approved:
- Issuing layoff notifications two years in a row, eventually laying off 44 frontline staff;
 - Imposing a six-year "hiring freeze" for frontline staff;
 - Severe short staffing at libraries and Adult Learning Centers;
 - Contracting out of custodial work;
 - Removal of security guards in the branches and a decrease in guards at Central and Flushing;
 - Slashing materials budgets;
 - Authorizing raises for the President/CEO and his executive staff;
 - Allowing non-Union support staff to go without raises for 4 years;
 - A radical contract for the President/CEO, including an evergreen clause that has since been removed;

(Continued on page 8)

Contracting Out

ON August 13, 2013, the Local filed a grievance against the administration for violating our contract for failing to hold a labor-management meeting to discuss the contracting out of custodial work. The administration rejected the grievance and the Local filed for arbitration. On November 14, 2013, we informed the membership that the Local filed an improper practice charge at the New York State Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) against the administration for not holding a labor-management meeting and not sharing the contracting-out contract.

On January 30, 2014, the Union and administration held a PERB conference with a judge, at which we discussed a possible settlement. The two parties agreed to hold off on pursuing the claim of the administration not holding a labor-management meeting until the arbitration, being held April 2, 2014. We also agreed that the administration would share the contracting-out request for proposal (RFP) and the



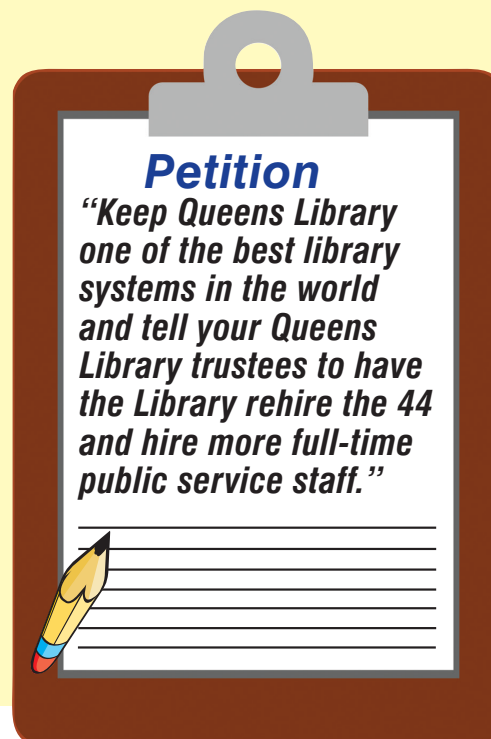
contract. The Local would sign a confidentiality agreement. In a very intriguing turn of events, during the week of March 24, 2014, the administration reneged on our agreement and refused to share the RFP and contract.

The administration's decision not to honor our agreement raises a striking question, "What are they hiding?" We will keep you posted.

Petition

IN mid-February, we created a petition to tell Mayor Bill de Blasio and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz they should instruct their appointed Queens Library trustees to demand that the Queens Library hire full-time public service staff, including the 44 laid-off staff, custodians (to end the contracting out), and librarians.

The recent reports of excessive, unnecessary salaries and wasteful capital spending at the Queens Library are deeply disturbing and have hurt the library's public service. Since 2008, the Queens Library President/CEO Thomas Galante has not hired a full-time public service staff member, including librarians, clerks, custodians and computer technicians, resulting in the loss of over 150 public service staff, 44 layoffs and the contracting out of custodial services. His actions have resulted in reduced hours, fewer programs, dirtier libraries, slower services



and demoralized staff. With the money used for excessive salaries and unnecessary capital projects, the library can hire more public service staff to provide free materials, programs, computers, Wi-Fi, and clean and safe libraries to thousands of diverse Queens Library users every day.

Our petition urged Mayor de Blasio and Borough President Katz to: "Keep Queens Library one of the best library systems in the world and tell your Queens Library trustees to have the Library rehire the 44 and hire more full-time public service staff."

In less than a month, our petition had 1,365 signers. At the March General Membership Meeting, we submitted it to Deputy Borough President Leroy Comrie, as the representative of Borough President Katz. Mr. Comrie told us he would ensure that the Borough President receives the petition. As of this writing, we have yet to submit it to Mayor de Blasio.

Local 1321 Members in the News



If you see something in the news media, please let us know at local1321@gmail.com so it can be included in the next newsletter.

Whitestone's **Susan Scatena** introduces reading to everything.

Yahoo Shines, "How this Awesome Librarian Gets Kids to Read," Sept. 20, 2013

<https://shine.yahoo.com/healthy-living/awesome-librarian-gets-kids-read-174800196.html>

Borough President Melinda Katz honored Langston Hughes' **John Crow** for his work supporting the Caribbean community in Queens.

New York Daily News, "Caribbean-American John Crow tapped as honoree for Queens Borough President Melinda Katz's first Black History Celebration" Feb. 16, 2014

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/honor-crow-article-1.1616016>

Ridgewood's **Christian Zabriskie** wrote an inspiring piece for the Huffington Post about all the great services Queens Library workers provide our customers. *Huffington Post, "Queens Library is Still Awesome"* Mar. 14, 2014

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christian-zabriskie/queens-library-is-still-a_b_4961167.html



Richmond Hill's **Rebecca Alibatya**, along with the Richmond Hill Friends Group, appeals for branch funds to buy books.

The Forum, "After Drastic Budget Cuts Richmond Hill Library Looks to Community for Help" Mar. 28, 2014

<http://theforumnewsgroup.com/2014/03/28/after-drastic-budget-cuts-richmond-hill-library-looks-to-community-for-help/>

The *Korea Daily* (중앙일보) of Friday, May 2, 2014 featured an interview with **Jane Kim** of Metadata Services (formerly Catalog Division). Ms. Kim was interviewed regarding the Queens Library's extensive Korean language collections. Ms. Kim and her colleague, **Ms. Kwangjoo Joe**, will be involved in further outreach service to the Korean community next month.

New DC 37 Delegate Elected



Precious Edwards resigned as one of our DC 37 delegates. At our March 2014 General Membership meeting, we elected Broadway Community Library's Librarian **Mike Wong** to fill the delegate position. Mike previously served as our Librarian Representative, but stepped down to take some time off. He couldn't resist the lure of helping his fellow brothers and sisters and decided to run for DC 37 delegate. "Thank you" to everyone who participated in the election. **Congratulations, Mike.**

IN MEMORIAM

Tijuan Brown, ACLM at North Hills

March 5, 1968 - February 5, 2014

Tijuan Brown was born in Jamaica, New York, and raised in the Bronx, New York. She received her Bachelor's Degree from The College of New Rochelle and her Master's Degree from Long Island University. Ms. Brown worked in Queens Library for almost 10 years in various locations. Her last position was the Assistant Community Library Manager at North Hills. Prior to that, she worked in New York Public Library and NYC Board of Education. Ms. Brown was a selfless

and strong woman, a dependable supervisor and a beloved friend. She was always willing to listen and offer suggestions. She loved books and reading. When customers were looking for a good book to read, they would seek her advice. She did not mind going out of her way to make them smile. We miss her laughter and presence. Ms. Brown is survived by her husband Demetrius Brown, Sr. and her two sons Demetrius Brown, Jr. and Daron Brown.

At Queens Library:

Local presses to rehire laid-off workers

LOCAL 1321 is picking up its fight to end the contracting out of custodian work at Queens Public Library and to get 44 workers laid-off in 2010 back to their jobs.

The initiative comes as the library President and CEO Thomas Galante faces FBI and city investigations and growing pressure to step down.

Local 1321 gathered 1,365 signatures on a petition distributed online and circulated by members at the St. Pat's for All Parade in Sunnyside, Queens. The petition demands:

- rehire the laid-off members,
- stop contracting out custodian services,
- boost staffing, and
- increase support for library services.

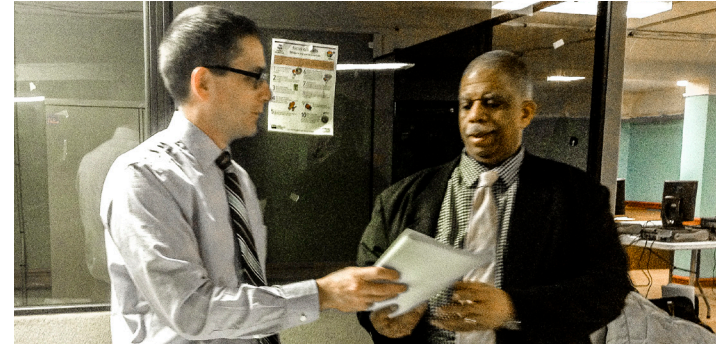
"The controversy surrounding President Galante has damaged the library's public image and ability to raise funds, and it threatens our members' hard work building support for public libraries over the years," said Queens Library Guild Local 1321 President John Hyslop. "As this controversy continues, we're going to intensify our campaign to defend our jobs and to promote library services for our patrons."

At the local's March meeting, members presented the petition to Deputy Chief of Staff Leroy Comrie from the office of Queens Borough President Melissa Katz.

Katz has emerged as one of Gallante's most vocal critics — along with Public Advocate Letitia James and City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer — and she has called for the embattled library boss to take a leave of absence.

But at its April 3 meeting, the library's board of trustees deadlocked 9-9 on a motion to suspend him when one trustee flew back from Florida just in time to vote no.

"Taxpayers pump hundreds of millions of dollars into the library system, and there is little to no oversight of



In March, President John Hyslop presented a petition to Leroy Comrie, deputy chief of staff at the Queens Borough President's office.

their money," said Ibrahim Khan, who represents Public Advocate Letitia James on the board. "We need real accountability and reform."

Galante's public pummeling began when the Daily News exposed his lavish compensation and excessive spending — including a \$392,000 pay package and a \$140,000 tab for renovating his office and adding a private outdoor smoking lounge — while he implemented staff cuts.

The News later revealed that Galante was earning \$150 an hour as a consultant to the Elmont Union Free School District on Long Island and has apparently steered work to a favored contractor, behavior that city and FBI investigators are now probing for possible criminality.

With the four-year call-back list expiring Sept. 20, Local 1321 has stepped up its campaign for rehiring the laid-off members. Hyslop joined the heads of DC 37's three other locals with library workers (Local 374's Cuthbert Dickenson, Local 1930's Valentin Colon and Local 1482's Eileen Muller) at a City Council budget meeting March 11 to press for improved staffing and funding. From 2008 to 2014, the staff of the city's three library systems combined fell by almost 1,000 to 3,283.

—Reprinted from PEP, May 2014

Out-of-Title Grievance

ON December 18, 1987, the library administration created the library's Office Associate Promotional Career Ladder policy. The career ladder establishes Office Associate Level I, II and III. Office Associate Level I supervises 2 or 3 Office Aides. Office Associate Level II supervises 4 to 6 Office Aides. Office Associate Level III supervises 7 or more Office Aides or Office Associates at Principal Branches.

Last year, the Union's leadership was informed that the Office Associates at three principal branches were not Office Associate Level IIIs but were either Office Associate Level I or II. Their Union representative informed CLS and HR about this, but CLS refused to correct the problem. Therefore, on behalf of those Office Associates, their representative filed an out-of-title grievance based on the 1987 memorandum. The Office Associates won their grievance, CLS upgraded them to Office Associate III, and the library paid them the appropriate salary.

This year, more Office Associates at Principal Branches were affected. After the upgrade of branches to Principal Branches, some Office Associates did not get the promotion. The administration informed them that

On behalf of all Union members, we filed an out-of-title grievance, stating that while Office Associates are working in the Principal Branches, they must be paid an Office Associate III's wages.

they must stay in their location as Office Associate I or II, until their position is filled. They immediately contacted their Union representative, because they are now working out-of-title based on the 1987 memorandum. Again, their Union representative informed CLS and HR about this, but CLS refused to correct the problem. Therefore, on behalf of all Union members, we filed an out-of-title grievance, stating that while these Office Associates are working in the Principal Branches, they must be paid an Office Associate III's wages. The outcome is pending the third-step hearing.

We hope that CLS acknowledges the hard work of their Office Associates and compensates them according to the library's own policy without having the Union involved.

Is This a Set Up?

By Margaret Gibson

LAST year a few weeks after sitting through an investigatory interview with a member, who was being accused of stealing a book, I witnessed an incident that I had to question.

As I was entering Central Library with a member (a CLM), the alarm went off. To my disbelief, two security guards, one at the desk and the other by the door, acted as though they did not hear the alarm. Since the prior incident was very fresh in my mind, I became a bit aggravated. I took that opportunity to ask out loud why it was not necessary to stop the member whilst she was entering the building when the alarm went off. My question attracted both guards' attention, and one of them asked to see the member's ID.

I was trying to figure why the guards ignored such a loud alarm

when the member entered the building. Since I had no good answers, I informed the member that the guards were probably waiting until later in the day when she was leaving the building to treat her as though she were stealing library materials. Based on that scenario and the many accusations that have been brought against our members, I concluded that Central Library's Security is solely interested in members who set off the alarm when they leave the building. This begs the question: **Is this a set up?**

Please be mindful of the materials that are supposedly checked out on your accounts. Anytime you are entering Central Library and the alarm goes off, especially if you already have library materials, go directly to the Customer Service desk and check your materials. Avoid being humiliated.

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ARE YOU A CYBORG?

By Kacper Jarecki

DO you sometimes feel fed up with work? Unless you're like a computer cyborg from the future that arrived here via time-travel technology and your emotion program got formatted by accident, then that's normal sometimes! Remember, just because you're being paid to work, it doesn't mean that you have to be miserable – that part is optional! Someday, you may die, so make the most of your day today – and don't do it necessarily for the library – do it for you!

One of the special things about working for the library in these random times is that the library is in a state of transition! No one knows what the future will hold – this is both scary and fun! It's scary because you feel afraid of things that you don't understand like ghosts or black holes. It's fun because now, more than ever, you have the opportunity to experiment and try new things at the library!

One of the special things about working for the library in these random times is that the library is in a state of transition!

I love trying new things at my library! It keeps stuff interesting. After all, after answering customers' questions 100 times about where the bathroom is and how to print, it can get potentially repetitive. Having a fun program will brighten up both your day and the customers' day! And remember, if you keep customers busy, then they'll have less time to get upset and complain!



It will also make you a more interesting person – maybe!

First of all, do you have any hobbies or interests? I hope so! One of my hobbies is table tennis, so my library hosts a ping pong club! Just follow your dreams and you'll succeed! As I mentioned above, libraries are dynamic places – it's not so much about circulation anymore as it is about programming and events! Perhaps you're a writer? Then host a writing club! Or perhaps you're into movies? Then do movie screenings at your agency! Perhaps, like me, you like animals! Then you can host pet therapy programs as my library is doing. Or maybe you like Scrabble, or knitting, or music?

One of my colleagues recently organized a Live Surgery Teleconference for high school students at the library! I was like, "What?" Think of a crazy idea and then go for it! Why not? Some other things that I've tried are: giving out bubble gum on Bubble Gum Day, petting a stuffed ferret on Ferret Awareness Day, hosting a jigsaw puzzle club, and even holding a Prison Pen Pal program (which was popular with our local convent). Perhaps you like to take photographs or you like drawing or you like to collect stickers! You can hang them up temporarily in your program room or display them on tables to host a fun exhibit!

And let me fill you in on a special secret! New York City is like the world capital of special people! So many authors and celebrities live here or visit. Go ahead and invite them to your library – chances are they will say yes! I invited Kathryn Leigh Scott from *Dark Shadows* and she agreed

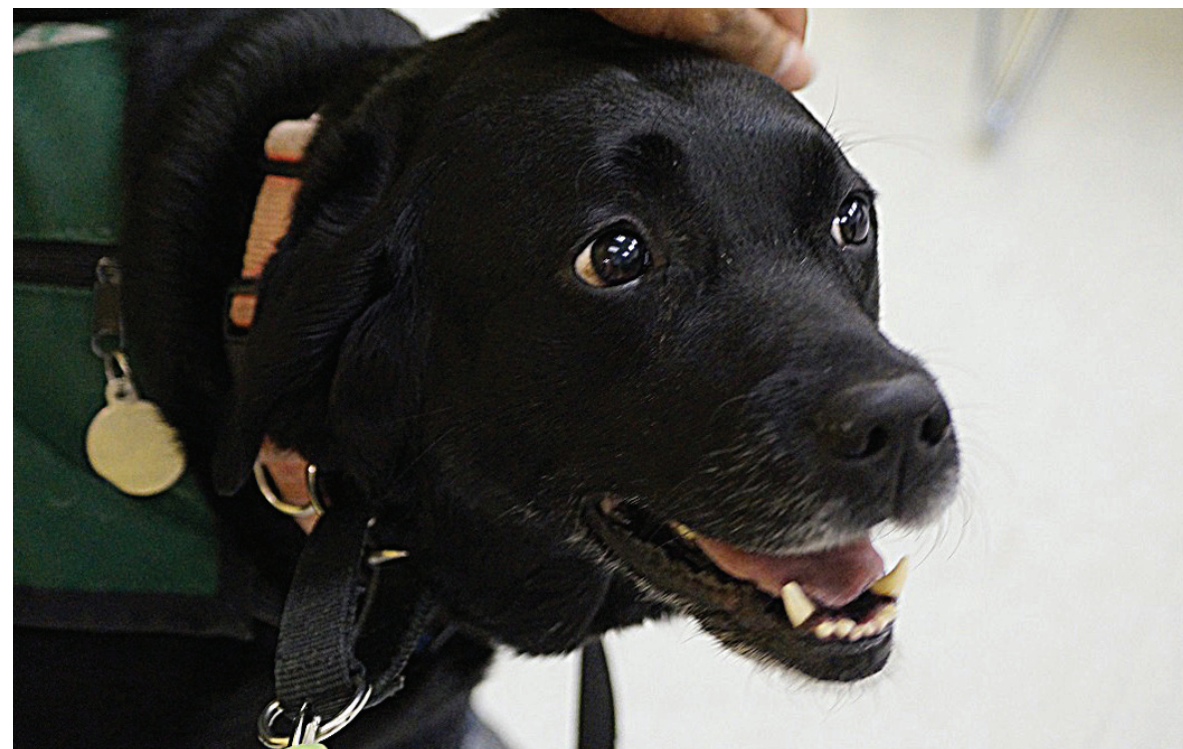
to come – just like that. And my library is so far, far away from any central place – so what's your excuse? And with Skype, even if the person you invite can't come physically, chances are promising that they can come virtually!

Maybe you have a tough manager, or whatever, who won't let you do any programs! That's okay, too! Remember you have your lunch break, your one whole hour just for you! You can use this time wisely! If you use 30 minutes of your lunch break every day for something, that adds up to 10 hours in a month – that's a bunch of time! You can

practice learning another language, or you can work on your novel! If you bring lunch from home, there's no reason why you can't find 30 minutes or more to use productively and become a famous multi-lingual novelist superstar! And don't forget that Queens is super diverse! Go out for a walk sometime and explore your community like Christopher Columbus did. You might discover a whole new culture just around the corner!

In short, take control of your job. Do the library a mutual favor! By doing fun programs, you'll increase programming numbers for your agency, yes, but most importantly, you'll have a great time and be happy and grow as a person! As your VP of Librarians, I support you!!!

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Kacper Jarecki's innovative programming includes "Reading to Dogs," where learners can practice reading out loud to a confidence-inspiring canine.

Student Debt Survey



GOVERNMENT estimates show that total outstanding student loan debt in the U.S. has recently surpassed \$1 trillion. This is a particularly relevant problem in public libraries, where high educational requirements for certain jobs mean that many library workers carry a significant student debt burden.

The Union is currently preparing to enter economic bargaining with the City of New York. As part of that process, we are collecting data from library workers regarding your student/educational debts. If survey responses show a significant problem, the Union will consider including student debt relief in its list of demands during negotiations.

Please assist us by completing the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/libraryworker-studentdebt>

All of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Please answer freely and fully. Thank you for your cooperation.