

Good evening, thank you for the opportunity to address the Council.

My name is Cynthia Webster and I am president of the Friends of Iroquois Branch Library.

Who here has a library card? If not, ask yourself why not?

Who here is a card carrying Friend of the Louisville Free Public Libraries?

If not, ask yourself why not?

I was employed for five years as a substitute clerk for the library system and have worked at all the libraries. I have seen who uses the libraries and how the libraries are used.

I realize that our city's leadership has a daunting task ahead of them. You cut police and fire budgets, you impact us all. But when you cut the library budget and curtail hours, you impact the neediest of our population.

At Iroquois, teens and younger students are there every day to use computers and to get homework help. Libraries are essential to JCPS raising achievement scores. Job hunters are at the library learning to build resumes and complete applications. Libraries are essential to a thriving economy. Weekends are especially important. Close a library on Monday, if you must.

At Iroquois, our immigrant population is learning English and taking citizenship classes. And they are bringing their children to storytime. Storytime is critical, especially to young families who have no resources for learning materials in the home.

AARP Free TaxAide is available at Main, Portland, Middletown and Iroquois libraries. I coordinated the free tax service at Iroquois for 14 years. Every year, we served several hundred clients without regard to age or income. The program continues without me and in February 2019, the Iroquois site assisted 238 TPs. At Portland, 151 were helped. Tax refunds are often the only time many of our citizens have discretionary funds to spend. They don't take fancy vacations, they spend in our community.

Please consider that the Louisville libraries are already underfunded and look elsewhere to fill your "budget gap." We are already doing our part.