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My name is Bethany Cunningham Gabbert. I reside at 1280 14th St. NE, Salem, OR 97301.

Our library is the public face for Salem. And right now, that face is sagging. As a member of the library advisory board, I've seen first hand the extraordinary job that the staff and volunteers do to cover up all the wrinkles and blemishes. But they can't disguise the fact that the city isn't committing the necessary resources. The Friends of the Library and The Library Foundation do an admirable job of contributing needed funds, ensuring that programming, services, and renovations take place. But they can't be expected carry all of the burden for the city. The city needs to look to other programs and divisions for budget cuts.

I can't testify in public because I'm teaching a writing class at Chemeketa. My students are only one of several populations who depend on the library. I'm also a new mother and many other mothers I know depend on the library for their sanity. Thanks to the Friends and the Foundation, the library offers story time, the discovery room, toddler totes, and wonderful children's programming. But you only have to visit the area in the middle of the morning to see how short-staffed the area is, and how dependent it, like most departments in the library is so dependent on volunteers.

There is no fluff in the library budget, only an institution crying out for more funds. More staff. More book budget. More computers. More services. If you cut the bookmobile, seniors in Salem will loose out. But the real loser is the City of Salem. Retirees, young families, and professionals all look at the quality of a city's library when deciding whether or not to make an area their home. Many of the city's goals can be met by increasing funding to the library: offerings for teens? check. Improved downtown? Check. More entertainment options for families? check. More offerings for seniors? Check. If the city truly wants to be "at your service" and enhance the livability of the city, then give the library the resources it needs to truly shine.

I truly enjoy my service on the library board. I wish that more residents could see the amazing job the staff does.