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Connecticut Libraries Applaud State House and Senate Passage of E-Book Legislation, Urge Governor Lamont's Signature

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. – May 15, 2025 – The Connecticut Library Consortium ([CLC](#)), Connecticut Library Association ([CLA](#)), and Connecticut Association for School Librarians ([CASL](#)) celebrate the Connecticut House of Representatives' 106-38 passage of long-awaited legislation to protect libraries and their patrons from predatory e-book and audiobook pricing by the Big Publishing industry.

S.B. 1234 was passed 35-1 by the Senate on May 8, and now heads to Governor Ned Lamont's desk for his signature. The legislation was championed by Connecticut State Representatives Matt Blumenthal and Eleni Kavros DeGraw, and State Senator Tony Hwang.

“This vote affirms that the State of Connecticut is no longer willing to be handcuffed by Big Publishing's unfair pricing for digital content,” said **Ellen Paul, Executive Director of the Connecticut Library Consortium**. “We are public institutions built on the promise of equitable access to information, while the publishing industry is built on the premise of profits.”

Libraries are essentially forced to lease their e-book collections according to publishers' restrictive and non-negotiable licensing terms. The legislation prohibits Connecticut libraries from agreeing to publishers' restrictive e-book licensing terms if those terms include artificial rental limits, prevent retention of collections over time, or prevent sharing of access across CT library systems, and other important provisions, including egregious pricing for e-books and audiobooks.

Connecticut's approach is uniquely deliberate in its regulation of libraries, not publishers. In contrast, Maryland enacted legislation in 2021, which was immediately challenged in court and ultimately struck down as unconstitutional for conflicting with federal copyright law. New York passed a nearly identical bill, but Governor Kathy Hochul vetoed it, citing the Maryland ruling. Connecticut has taken a different path, leveraging state authority to establish clear restrictions on the types of contracts libraries can enter into without overstepping federal copyright protections.

“This is about fairness and protecting taxpayers,” said **Scott Jarzombek, President of the Connecticut Library Association**. “This bill puts our state, and those who join us in this fight, on a more equal and appropriate footing with the publishing industry for the digital age.”

Publishers have often claimed that restricting digital content pricing and terms hurts authors, but the publishers, not libraries, determine how and how much authors are paid. Libraries support both authors and publishers, but they are not parties to the publishing contracts that govern author compensation. These agreements are private and negotiated directly between the author (or their agent) and the publisher. Libraries have consistently supported fair compensation for authors and would welcome changes to publishing contracts that ensure authors receive a larger share of digital revenues.

The three organizations now call on Governor Ned Lamont to sign the bill into law, which provides a roadmap for other states to follow. Outlined in the bill's ‘trigger’ clause, this legislation requires other states to enact substantially similar laws before enforcement in Connecticut begins. This mechanism is designed to protect the state from retaliatory action and legal exposure—ensuring Connecticut won't have to stand alone.

“Our goal isn't just to protect Connecticut libraries, it's to spark a national movement of all libraries, librarians, and the communities and schools we represent,” said **Jenny Lussier, President of the Connecticut Association of School Librarians**. “This is as much a movement of values as it is affordable access.”

Libraries across Connecticut have watched their digital budgets strain under unsustainable pricing, with some spending up to 20% of their annual budgets just replacing expired, high-demand digital titles rather than expanding collections.

Key Differences Between Connecticut SB 1234 (2025) and Maryland SB 432 (2021)

Category	Connecticut SB 1234 (2025)	Maryland SB 432 (2021)
Trigger Clause	Yes. Connecticut’s law only takes effect after other states with a combined population of 7 million enact substantially similar legislation. This delayed activation limits legal exposure and signals a coordinated national approach.	No. Maryland’s law took immediate effect statewide, becoming a test case and legal target without support from similar laws in other states.
Regulated Entity	The bill regulates libraries. It prohibits libraries from agreeing to certain restrictive contract terms. It does not compel publisher action or impose licensing mandates.	The bill directly regulates publishers. It mandates that publishers license e-books to libraries on “reasonable terms,” which federal courts found conflicted with copyright law.

Federal Copyright Law Risk	Lower risk. Connecticut avoids directly infringing on publisher rights under the Copyright Act. It restricts contractual behavior by libraries, not the rights of copyright holders.	Higher risk. Maryland's law was ruled unconstitutional because it compelled publisher behavior in ways that interfered with federally protected copyright exclusivity.
Contract Flexibility	Allows libraries to enter into contracts with terms that reflect reasonable lending limitations (e.g., number of users at a time) and technological safeguards. Also requires optional license structures such as pay-per-use or perpetual licenses.	Requires publishers to license to libraries but does not explicitly allow or require flexible structures like pay-per-use or perpetual license options.
Disclosure and Transparency	Prohibits non-disclosure clauses in library contracts that would prevent sharing of terms with other libraries in the state.	No similar provisions around contract transparency or inter-library disclosure.
Enforcement Mechanism	Requires judicial forum for contract disputes and does not invoke state-level consumer protection law for enforcement.	Defines violations as "unfair, abusive, or deceptive trade practices," opening publishers to enforcement under Maryland's consumer protection statutes.
Legal Severability	Includes language that voids non-severable provisions that would prevent enforcement of the bill's protections.	No specific severability clause identified.
Interlibrary Loan and Preservation	Explicitly protects interlibrary loan rights and allows libraries to make nonpublic preservation copies.	Does not mention interlibrary loan or preservation copying rights.

About Connecticut Library Consortium

The Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC) is a non-profit membership group serving over 970 public, academic, school and special libraries. The CLC leverages the collective power of our members to initiate

cost-effective, value-added services to strengthen libraries. We believe the libraries are fundamental to a literate, equitable and just society. Learn more at <https://www.ctlibrarians.org/>.

About Connecticut Library Association

The Connecticut Library Association (CLA) is a 125+-year-old association of professional and paraprofessional library staff working together for the betterment of the state's people. CLA advises members, presents to municipalities and library-adjacent groups on the operation and maintenance of public, school, academic, and special libraries. CLA members work to ensure that all residents of Connecticut, regardless of geographic location, social or economic status, age, level of physical or intellectual ability, cultural background, religious beliefs, size, or citizenship status have access to essential information, technologies, and collections. Learn more at <https://ctlibraryassociation.org/>.

About Connecticut Association of School Librarians

CASL is committed to excellence in education by ensuring that students are active readers and effective users of ideas and information to become lifelong learners. The Association provides leadership, professional development, publicity, networking and support to the Connecticut school library community. CASL supports licensed, highly qualified library media specialists and fully funded library programs in all K-12 schools. <https://casl.wildapricot.org/>.

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