



## **MLA Position Statement on Executive Order No. 2009-36 Abolishing the Department of History, Arts and Libraries**

**Adopted by the MLA Board of Directors July 31, 2009**

The Michigan Library Association (MLA) is opposed to Executive Order No. 2009-36 because it goes much further than abolishing the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries (HAL).

MLA is not opposed to the elimination of HAL and the estimated savings of \$2 million as MLA recognizes the difficult economic times facing Michigan.

But the library community is opposed to the Executive Order because it diminishes the position, influence, and stature of the library community and the State Library of Michigan without recognizing the value of state library resources. It also fails to recognize the cost savings and effective delivery of statewide library services achieved through the leadership of the Library of Michigan and the collaboration, group purchasing, and resource sharing of the entire statewide library community.

The Executive Order calls for breaking up the Library of Michigan without any real cost savings. It threatens to destroy a library system that works as a cohesive unit, dismantles library collections without a plan or any better alternative, and eliminates the position of State Librarian. It threatens free and open access to information and could decimate Michigan citizens' access to unique and valuable resources.

It fails to include any library representation on the proposed Michigan Center for Innovation and Reinvention Board whose first charge is to "maximize the benefits to the public of existing state library and historical resources including collections, buildings, and skilled personnel."

Ironically, what is truly at risk in this year's budget cycle is statewide library services – the vision of the Library of Michigan – including the Michigan eLibrary (MeL) online information and subscription services and MeLCat the statewide interlibrary loan system. The Senate's recently passed budget would cut library funding from \$10 million to \$7.5 million. This is less than half of what is statutorily required by law. A reduction of this magnitude threatens the maintenance of effort required to sustain the federal funding for these programs: the entire statewide resource sharing and interlibrary loan system could collapse.

The Michigan Library Association supports efforts to maintain library services and keep their functions whole under the Library of Michigan within state government. And it supports maintaining state aid to libraries at \$10 million in the 2009-10 budget.