



**Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform
Summary of Public Input: October 16 – October 31, 2007**

The excerpted statements below summarize public comments received by the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform through the commission's web site, e-mail address, or by mail between October 16, 2007 and October 31, 2007. Comments specifically about property taxes have been forwarded to the Commission on State Tax and Financing Policy.

- Current legislators are to blame for the current "crisis." For the past two sessions all that was discussed was "what time zone" should we be on, "fireworks" twice and "leasing of the toll road." Legislators knew this day was coming and did nothing. I will not vote for any incumbent. That said, the "fair tax system" is the way to go. Everone shares the burden, it's discriminatory to single out real property owners to carry the majority of the load. Schools are totally out of control. If those not paying now would have to kick in you'd hear a lot of screaming. Eliminate property tax totally. Reducing them is temporary; the high rates will be back. Replace with sales and income taxes. It's the only "fair way."
- I attended the forum last night at New Albany and found that the format was somewhat concerning. At my table there were several elected officials that took the attitudes that the State was the bad guy and their departments or procedures were perfect and did not need to be evaluated or reviewed. It struck me funny that they all blamed the State. My top three issues are: 1) School construction is out of control, spending millions on fancy designs in lieu of functional facilities are a waste of our tax dollars. In addition Prevailing Wage Law adds to the cost of a project only because it's a public facility. 2) Consolidation of local and city departments must occur in order to stop duplicating efforts. 3) The state and local government branches are wasting dollars everyday. Less government, less taxes.
- One thought that I had last night after the forum in New Albany: On reassessment issues, instead of the state ordering reassessments and having to hire outside firms at more than a million dollars, let the local assessors and their staff who do the job daily do the reassessments. Since I can remember, reassessments have always been messed up by these outside firms.
- How about saving some money rather than shifting it to other areas. Use the federal tax forms, which have to be attached, as the basis of the Indiana Income Tax. No adjustments. Modify the Indiana rate if needed to maintain current income. We would no longer need the Indiana Department of Revenue in its present capacity. Only to verify that everyone files a copy of their Federal form, and deposit the checks.
- I can't believe you would even consider closing small community libraries. Obviously, you do not understand what they mean to these communities. Here in my town, the kids, and even the kids who live out of town, use the library all the time. Students use the computers and books to do research. Parents who don't have access to computers go to the library to check our Edline program from school to keeep track of their kids' grades and activities. The school borrows materials from our library. The senior citizens who live in town frequent the library to check out books and to socialize. Some of these people only have the library for social interaction. The state is putting a high premium on reading, which they should, and closing a community library will deny students the opportunity to check out books of their own, hear a story read, or just see how much



- pleasure can be had from reading books. Our town library represents a strong presence here. My town worked very hard to get grades to remodel the library. It is used as a meeting place and activities. Losing our library would be destroying a large part of this community. I am sure other communities feel the same way. In another town in our area, the only thing that is holding the town together is the library. Libraries and reading vs. closing small libraries--should not even be an issue!!!!
- I am a citizen of a small town. It has been brought to my attention that we are being considered to consolidate our library. I truly hope that this does NOT happen. My children as well as myself would be greatly disappointed if we had to drive 15 miles just to use the next town. We also have a lot of Amish residents as well, what would they do??
- It seems that eliminating the property tax is not possible due to the huge amount of revenue that is raised through property taxes. But I would like to see property taxes frozen at the current tax rate and assessed values. All future increases in revenue could come from sales and/or income taxes. This would gradually shift the cost of local government to everyone, not just property owners. It would also eliminate the need for future reassessments and would allow for a consolidation of local government. You could allow a period for all property owners to appeal their current tax assessment and after that the property would carry exactly that amount of tax. All new construction would need to be assessed once and its property tax could be set in concrete as well.
- Don't close my library.
- Make design build mandatory! There is a design build law in Indiana but it is not used. Why? Because bid spec and the politics of that win every time, not cost! Do away with school buying coops that require tax financing to support! If you want to have a buying program, require schools to buy from state deals or publish what they want on the internet! Have one school superintendent per county! Maintain separate boards if the public wants but get rid of 150 extra highly paid staff! Develop standard software for all government throughout the state and mandate that every one use it! Make sure that it is all available on the Internet. Ask that all non-emergency government services must require legal citizenship!
- I hope this email will be heard and taken seriously. I am appalled at the Commission on Local Government Reform 's suggestion of eliminating and/or consolidating the public library systems in our county. These libraries are the focal points for many patrons, my family included, as well as many of our senior citizens and school age children. I understand money needs to be cut in order to balance the state budget, but why don't you look at the health care the legislators receive. What job entails the legislators and state senators to a lifetime of health insurance benefits? What about library districts that spend their money ineffectively? Why would you consolidate them with libraries that are frugal and spend conservatively? So many of today's corporate financial answers end at " consolidation." The state is not a corporation, as much as Mitch Daniels thinks that it is. Is this another state entity that may be sent off to the private sector so the State can reap some reward? Think about the taxpayers in these smaller areas that depend on the smaller libraries. Please vote no to the consolidation and elimination of the library systems in our county.
- I read today that the panel still cannot come together on a plan for the citizens of Indiana. I see no reason why our legislators will ever agree on how to tax property. For this reason alone, the panel needs to look at property tax repeal and a constitutional change. I like Dr. Bill Styring's plan to eliminate property tax. It can be found at www.STopIndiana.com. Is there anyone more qualified in the state of Indiana than Dr. Styring to come up with an economic plan? I edit the blog, Hoosiers For Fair Taxation.



We want property tax repeal and it seems (when given the option) that is what all Hoosiers want, too. Cut spending and eliminate property tax. That is the only solution that will work and bring lots of new investment to Indiana and solve the subprime mortgage and abandoned house crisis at the same time.

- The solution to this present property tax debacle is simple, abolish property taxes. Replace the lost revenue with meager increases in sales and income taxes. Keep stability in the tax base by retaining the property tax on commercial and industrial properties. Generate new revenue to replace the old revenue by taxing corporate advertising.
- No to consolidation! Leave our library alone. Cut your budget somewhere else. Try making people on welfare that are physically fit work for their money and you will see them drop like flies, therefore money saved.
- Please DO NOT consolidate our library system. Our library is top notch, and we want to keep it that way!
- Cut property tax to 25% of what it is now, increase sales tax, and user tax to make up the loss from the property tax. All would share in the tax burden not just the home owner.
- We are not in favor of the consolidation of public libraries and the elimination of small and mid-size library systems.
- Three suggestions that have merit were not in a recent newspaper summary of input to the commission. The first is the combination of local services such as police, fire, trash, etc. from surrounding communities and counties. Another would be to privatize as many local functions as possible. It is well known that private business is more efficient than government. Also, with employee benefit cost rapidly escalating the pressure will remain on tax increases if these functions remain in the public sector. Finally, limit the growth in all forms of local government spending to the annual inflation rate.
- Regarding the consolidation of public libraries and possibly the elimination of small and mid-size library systems such as our public library... Our family, neighbors and friends hope that won't be necessary. Many citizens in the state living on farms, and in the country are located 10 miles or more from the nearest library. Consolidation of libraries would mean that many who now count on our local facilities would no longer justify the expense of traveling to use larger facilities further away. We support the our library, and urge you to reconsider any move that would take this valuable asset from our community.
- Leave our township library alone. Nothing will be saved by merging it with the county system. Leave our local library board in control.
- Please DO the following: improve government efficiency; make the property tax system equitable; retain the existing balance of the tax burden across multiple types; prioritize spending on education and infrastructure (repairing existing highways, etc.); and reduce/eliminate government waste. Please DO NOT: increase the sales tax; mess up the entire tax system; and build more highways (specifically I-69 to Evansville).
- Focusing on property taxes is misguided. Property taxes are stable, are not leaky and are a reflection of services used. Sales tax is leaky. Last time I checked Indiana was not a member of the states who are asking that online sellers charge sales tax. Yes, there is some redundancy. The county structure is ineffective. A county council and county commissioners? Some consolidation might make sense. For example, city-county personnel, purchasing, and solid waste districts need to serve all the county residents not just the residents of the unincorporated county. Indiana focuses too much on roads; needs more public transportation. Indiana should not favor rural areas over cities. Do not take away cities' rights.



- Abolish all taxes on commercial and residential real and personal property, business inventory, estates and sales of any merchandise, new or used. Eliminate all jobs, elected and bureaucratic associated with assessing, collecting and keeping records for these taxes. Replace these taxes with a flat % tax on all types of income earned, or unearned by residents of the state, and by individuals working in the state. Stop spending money and resources on, and eliminate the jobs involved in taking care of, dead beats that don't work, and irresponsible couples that dump the results of their reckless behavior on the rest of the taxpayers to house, feed, clothe, and provide medical care. Stop spending money on make work construction projects involving schools, that are paybacks for special interest group campaign contributions. Eliminate spending on needless bureaucratic Department of Education jobs that have nothing to do with teaching children anything. Control health care and pension costs for all public employees including teachers, by using 401k-type retirement plans which reflect the average type found in the private sector, and employee contributions to health care insurance that reflect the average contributions in the private sector. Start worrying about the people and businesses that have been willing to build, invest, and contribute to the growth of the state that are already here.
- Schools spend alot of money on sports: equipment, coaches, and transportation. Schools should stop sports related expenditures. School is for learning. I am a taxpayer and I do not like paying for the recreation of children I don't even know. Health care needs to come down. United Health Care is a company that lets people accumulate a "bank" with their premiums. Healthy people accumulate big banks and sick people have to use their banks and buy extra coverage. That is fair and promotes healthy habits. School corporations and local governments should check into this. Developers are causing big problems for existing taxpayers in communities subjected to high growth rate. Since residential homes must pay a tap-in fee for sewers and water, developers should pay a tap-in fee for the extra load on schools and local services. A 110 home subdivision generates at least 100 new school children. Multiply the 100 new children by at least 8 years of schooling, \$8,000 per student $\times 100 \times 8 = \$6,400,000$. Now, divide this number by 110 = \$58,000/home. Seems fair to me, since I will be paying \$3,000/year for the rest of the time I am living in my present house. It seems alot more fair than what my school corporation has done to me. The new buyer or the developer has a choice. I don't - pay it or lose my home. Stop welfare for foster parents to take care of somebody else's kids. Start orphanages again. Don't you know this welfare and the welfare to people who don't work feeds the drug industry. Stop this and the drugs will dry up because the money won't be there. Go hang around with some drug addicts for a day or so and you will agree with me.
- I was just in our library today and they informed me that we could lose our library and would have to travel to another city (if they will let us) for borrowed reading material. This is very upsetting to think that the government could take our library and leave us with nothing. I thought as parents and teachers we should encourage reading but if we don't have a close source how are we suppose to do this. I know I don't go to our nearby city very often and for families who come home from work, be with their kids after school, eat supper, do homework, who has time to run to to the nearby city to get reading material, videos, or materials for school reports and extra reading. I would think a lot of people in our area would not take the time to get books, movies or attend the many activities they plan for the kids or adults plus the added time and expense of having to DRIVE a distance to get materials and to then get back when those materials are due. I have seen teens who babysit in my town after school, who walk over to the library to read to them or pick out books to read at home. I have seen senior citizen selecting books as well as school age children selecting materials after school. The library is just a block



from our school. I would hate to see you take away our library just because you think we need to consolidate. What is wrong with small towns? We are just as important as the larger town in our county. Please don't take away our library.

- I propose that local property taxes should be reduced by transferring all non-academic high school expenses to the state treasury, including: cost of all construction of new facilities, cost of maintenance of existing facilities, payment of additional salaries for school staff members such as coaches, band directors, etc, cost for supplies and other operating costs for these non-academic programs. Transfer existing debt for all non-academic expenditures to the state, in some cases pro-rating the portion of school debt for the non-academic portion of the debt. Then, immediately reduce property taxes by the amounts described above. Make school districts apply for all future expenditures and wage increases for non-academic expenditures through state government. I think this would control the often abused expenditures for these activities, and it would remove a major source of criticism of local school expenditures.
- There is only one way for the government to reform and that's CUT COST. I am appalled at the spending that is out of control. When a family has a increase of bills, they do have have the luxury of raising taxes to make ends meet. Households have to cut spending. They do not have a choice. We are building a multibillion dollar dome and the taxpayer is footing the bill. Did we have a say in the matter? NO !!! So many Hoosiers are paying for something they had no choice in. I almost bet that if it was placed on a ballot it would have been shot down. That money could have been solely funded by fundraising events. But it was easier to tax Hoosiers. You want to fix whats wrong? CUT YOUR SPENDING LIKE THE REST OF US !!!!
- Please, please do not let them close our small libraries. We live in a small town and not every citizen has transportation to take them to the bigger public library. Our small town libraries offer blood pressure screening for our citizens, we have activities for adults and children alike that would not be utilized if we had to go to the larger libraries because of the fact that a lot of the older people do not drive there anymore. We have a lot of programs for the kids and thanks to the preschool story time programs, my granddaughter loves to read and gets on the honor roll in school every grading period. I don't think she would have done that if not for the story time and reading programs being right here in town. Our library also serves as a place to visit with others from town and sort of a community center. Please do not let them close our library.
- Eliminating or lowering property taxes NEEDS TO INCLUDE OWNERS OF RENTAL PROPERTIES. Landlords having huge expenses maintaining rental properties in addition to trying to keep up with property taxes such as maintenance costs (which continue to increase due to higher costs of materials and labor), as well as vacancy factor (no rents coming in between tenants), and mortgage payments. All these costs have to be be passed on in the form of higher rent amounts for tenants, who themselves can barely keep up with the cost of living. Or, landlords have to use their own personal funds to pay for some of the costs of owning a rental property. Worse case scenario is losing a property as a result of not being able to continue to cover higher expenses.
- I have ideas to generate revenue.
- I would like exemptions on rental properties.
- As a member of a small town community, and also as a small town library employee, I am appalled by the idea of library consolidation in my county. Each of the local libraries has its own unique history and services to offer. I believe that the personal attention that can be given to each patron is much greater in an unconsolidated library. Because the director can personally see the ramifications of his or her decisions, he or she will make decisions that better serve the community. Another fear of consolidation is the closure of



smaller, less used libraries. I have to tell you, that is a frightening prospect. Even though some libraries are small and have less patrons, they still serve a purpose. If they are closed due to consolidation, the patrons that visited those libraries may be unable to go further distances to visit the main library or a large branch of the library. Those people will then become part of the underserved population. In conclusion, library consolidation is not the answer to the financial woes local governments are facing. Consolidation will take away the personal attention and consideration given to the individuals and to the communities. It will also take away some people's only access to the library. If the purpose of the library is not to serve the individuals and the community they live in, then what is it?

- Regarding news reports about library consolidation... I would just like to make my voice heard on this issue. I would hate to see this happen and possibly see my town lose its library. I use the library several times a month. My husband goes up on occasion for school materials and we have a freshman in high school, who if needed can always run uptown to get materials for school. It would be an inconvenience to have to go to the next city every time we wanted a book.
- I am very interested in hearing what is shared at this forum. Especially any potential ways to reduce and, or control local spending and size of local government. Plus I want to say as a Realtor that I disagree with the Realtor PAC on their plan as currently presented. I am very much in favor of property tax repeal and as an owner of several investment properties I would be willing to pay a 1 to 3 % transfer tax when I sell a property if there is either the complete elimination of property taxes, or at worst a very firm cap on % collected by property tax.
- I am a property and sales tax paying homeowner in Indiana who is writing this e-mail to BEG for consolidation of ALL government agencies and law enforcement, as well as libraries, school districts, and whatever else can be consolidated. THE OVERLAPPING IS ABSURD!
- I pay taxes for schools that I don't have children in, a war I don't want and now they want to take the library to another town. It's the only thing that I pay taxes on that I really use, beside recycling. Consolidation would mean the end of my public library. I am against it.
- I am a kindergarten teacher at our local elementary school. I use the local libraries on a regular basis for materials to assist me in my teaching. Many of my students and their families make regular visits to the library. It would be a tremendous loss to our local communities if these facilities were closed. Please allow us to keep this precious jewels.
- 1. Eliminate all of township government. It serves no purpose in today's world. 2. Based on county size, consolidate police, fire, and emergency medical services under one governmental entity. Not every small town needs three police cars, two firetrucks and an ambulance. Many small towns are having trouble finding trained people and volunteers to staff them now, anyway. 3. Eliminate the assessor's offices. If Indiana is on a fair market value format, it seems logical to have the real estate agents, who set the selling price, to do the assessments. Have professional appraisers do the industrial and commercial properties. Then establish an equitable system to cover inflationary costs. 4. Remove school corporations from the local funding formula and don't allow athletic projects to be funded by taxpayers - those projects be paid for through local, voluntary fund-raising efforts. 5. Establish a free textbook program. 6. Raise Indiana income tax rates to an even 4 percent. 7. Use the lottery profits to the reduce property taxes using a formula based on the percentage of single-family homeowners over age 65 in each county. This would help counties with the highest percentage of aging homeowners keep property taxes lower. Chances are they are also the counties with least amount of commercial and industrial development.



- Counties need the option of electing 5 commissioners. Or perhaps population should decide whether 3 or 5. The status quo isn't working in my county.
- Elimination the office of the township trustee. Instituting a user tax to replace and eliminate the property tax. These changes would help enforce the idea that Indiana is a progressive state that can adapt and that cares for its citizens.
- The Commission SHOULD NOT consolidate local libraries and schools. They may lose many of the excellent programs and initiatives that make them unique and a part of their community. They will lose freedom and funds. Such moves, especially the proposal to eliminate county taxes to be managed by the state, while potentially lowering taxes slightly, will take the money away from where it is utilized, needed, and beneficial to community development. It may give the state government more power, but at what cost? I strongly oppose such suggestions.
- The Daniels administration needs to look at what it is doing to local school corporations by not administering the funds paid into the General Fund by LOCAL taxpayers for their own school systems on time. This forces LOCAL school corporations to have to borrow money to keep operating, pay interest on the loans, and take the blame for the STATE government inadequacy. The Daniels administration should STOP making school corporations take money out of the CAPITAL PROJECTS Fund for maintenance and operating costs of schools. The Daniels administration should STOP changing the accounting procedures for school systems and START making school systems start using the same software. Why don't you people start using your heads and run this like you should run your homes? Make schools and government SAVE UP for capital projects BEFORE they are started. Think of all the money that could be saved in interest on loans and all the interest that could go into the CAPITAL FUND while saving. EVEN BETTER -- GET RID OF ALL THESE "FUNDS" AND MAKE ONE BIG FUND! JUST ISOLATE EACH SCHOOL SYSTEMS PAYMENTS INTO IT SO THEY KNOW WHERE THEY STAND! If all the Funds were combined into one big fund, the State got it's act together and paid out of it competently so the local school corporations had a steady cash stream out of it and they were allowed to save up for their projects instead of being forced to borrow - they could maybe get a "leg up" on their savings by a temporary sales tax to get the Fund in the black and start generating interest for it's local school corporations. The sales tax could fly if it was advertised correctly, was temporary and had a payback that was measurable.
- The State of Indiana, if anything, should look at this whole situation from the top down and not immediately attempt to dissolve or consolidate the most effective, the very cheapest form of government – the township units. The classes for assessors provided by the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) has been outsourced. Level I and Level II tests are not based on processes the State is currently using, specifically "trending." There is no consistency in the DLGF's direction causing trouble for the county and township assessors. Shelby County is one of 85+ counties who hire a professional assessing firm to do the real estate and commercial property assessing. If "professionals" are preferred by Gov. Daniels, then I would like to point out that most of the residential, commercial, and land is already being done by "professionals" and we still are in a huge muddle here. Tonight, at the forum in Franklin, I found that few citizens truly understand the facts of budgets, abatements, TIF districts, and how the system works in general – therefore, they make many statements that are based purely on emotion. Anyone who thinks a county auditor and a county assessor could be combined into one job does not understand what is involved with these positions. We want to address the majority of counties and townships with rural roots. If and when you consider any sort of elimination or consolidation, I truly pray your committee will not lump



these troubled, large metro counties into the same boat as the majority of the other, mostly rural, townships! Yes, they need something done in many cases. You must consider that each county and township is unique and cannot be lumped together with the few large ones. They are as different as night and day; their circumstances are totally different. We KNOW where leased equipment at schools, etc., cell phone towers, recreational vehicles, snowmobiles, and many other items are, who has what, and we do a much more thorough job than any office in the “city/county” could begin to do. We manage to provide fire protection for ALL the people, farms, and businesses in rural Indiana within a few miles of each persons home. Consolidating local volunteer fire departments would mean longer response time and a much higher cost for that service. Fire departments farther away from residences and farms would drive up insurance rates for many people because of the distance factor; this will NOT save our township taxpayers money on insurance. And, when it comes to township assistance for the poor, “we do not just dole out money” because we are asked to– we KNOW these people and WHO is truly in need and WHO is just trying to “work the system.” Bottom line: the township trustee saves much more in “assistance” than any state or county run agency could because we have to work on a very tight budget and we do take the time to investigate each case. When we read a few years ago that Indianapolis (Marion County) spent \$ 1.94 in administrative cost for every \$ 1.00 that was distributed to the poor, we just about fainted! Our township assistance budget has NO administrative costs in it and we don’t ask for any at budget time. We feel that is part of the trustee’s job and all the money spent in Hendricks Township is for Direct Assistance to the poor. Many seemed to think at the forum tonight that we “duplicate services” (with human services, etc.) which is far from the truth. Unlike the State run agencies that seem to just “give assistance without much problem,” we do follow up on each applicant with telephone calls to investigate if all answers on their application are truthful and correct. This does take time, but that’s what Township Trustees do. Yes, the township trustees and assessors have been around for many, many years. It certainly is the grassroots form of government, serving the people directly and diligently. We operate on a budget of \$.04 per \$100 assessment. \$.02 for the township general fund, \$.02 for the fire fighting fund, and we have \$.00 in our tax rate structure for township assistance as we have a little money invested. No, it is not the way to solve the financial woes of this state by abolishing us. This is not the fault of the township trustee/assessors. Our work has been done long ago. Basically, the county level of government got us in a horrible mess during the period of the past fifteen years. When you speak of saving property tax money by eliminating the township level of local government and “turning their responsibilities over to county government,” it honestly causes us to shudder, and makes our blood boil! The inefficiency at the county level is indescribable. The first thing our county commissioners and county council would have to do to take care of the business of the fourteen townships would be to hire extra staff to handle our work load. Second, they would probably hire an outside consultant and of course buy new software! If the duties of the township trustee/assessor would be consolidated into one big, horrible State system – it would be total havoc. Each property, each entity’s personal property is totally different, especially in the farm community. Each must have personal knowledge to do this job correctly. NO COOKIE CUTTER SYSTEM can do the job correctly and I guarantee that it is a sure receipt for disaster! Lost assessments and far higher costs. A total state-wide system would be lethal. The total budget for all funds in our township was \$ 36,000. We, as many rural trustees did, grew up right here – we are rooted here. That’s why they call it “Grass Roots Government”. Remember, the GRAND TOTAL for our township government was only \$.04 per \$ 100 of assessed valuation. The most important item that can be done is to get school funding, especially for all capital projects, totally away



from the property tax system. Increase sales or income tax – whatever. The local schools comprise 70% “plus” of our property taxes! Township government is basically 1 %. Eliminating township government and township assessing will not remedy the horrible situation upon us. You must start at the top and work down the ladder of state government; and, the Legislature MUST deny the special business interests lobby, the Chamber of Commerce lobby, and make businesses pay inventory tax once again. The elimination of the inventory tax, with nothing to replace it, along with trending has devastated home and farm owners. People who try to keep their property modern are being penalized by the current system. Then, abatement needs to be addressed fully. Many huge businesses pay barely any property taxes between abatement and the inventory tax deduction. Business has really gotten a major “pass” in all this madness.

- Property tax should be permanently repealed by a constitutional process. All assessor offices should be closed. Consolidate school administrations on county or bi-county basis. Restructure pyramid layers of government to eliminate duplications of functions. MOST IMPORTANT, REGARDLESS OF ONE'S POSITION ON PROPERTY TAX, CITIZENS SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE THEIR CHOICE VIA REFERENDUM.
- Growing up in the poorest county at the time, I didn't see much culture in the world. Most years in my life didn't see a very good Christmas or school year because my family was poor. School teachers encouraged us, but it was the public library that kept my passions alive. I would go there almost every day in the summer to get books. By the time I was in 5th grade I had read the entire children's section and moved onto the biographies and reference sections. I taught myself sign-language and learned almost everything about the animals of the world. I read about foreign places I never dreamed I'd actually see, and I learned customs of foreign civilizations. Today, I see my daughter taking on the same passion. Although she is only two, her favorite activity is going to the library to get books. I also see this with my students at the our local library. After school, they flock to its resources often carrying their knowledge to me. To be quite frank, if these libraries were closed my student that lives next door couldn't do his homework I assign because he doesn't have a dictionary at home. His vocabulary homework would slowly drag down his grade. If we consolidated libraries the closest library for my students (who often have parents with no cars) wouldn't be able to access a libraries knowledge because the closest one would be a ½ hour away. Library consolidation would be catastrophic to Indiana's intelligence. Teachers would be limited because many use the public library to supplement their poorly developed school libraries. Students would turn to television and the internet. Both lack the availability of the core knowledge people need to be successful adults. Please, I beg you, do not allow this consolidation to happen. It would be the end of our society as we know it.
- I have been a resident of my town for 23 years and I am a registered voter. I would like to address the issue of consolidating local libraries and a county library board. My community library adds important value to our community and contributes to the educational climate of our city. My library serves, especially in today's world, as a safe haven for our children, a place to stay occupied in a beneficial manner to themselves and the community as a whole. It fills the gap for people who can't afford computers and large numbers of books, or have no access to other resources. It's unique position uplifts and balances our community. Take it away and you limit the number of people with access to those benefits and to the good habits it encourages. It will change the face of my town. Ideally, we need more libraries, not less. I believe that consolidating the local boards to one county board to trim some of the budget while requiring one representative from each area, would be feasible.



- Local tax payers should have the right to vote for or against any new school buildings and libraries. I pay a \$1000.00 a year for schools and I don't have any kids in school. The state should control all new construction for schools. Too much money is wasted for pie-in-the-sky wishes. I'm glad I only have two years until I retire so I can move out of state.
- While I did enjoy the format and I do believe there were lots of good ideas brought out, I wanted to make sure one more point is brought out about those that attended these forums. At my table there were 7 participants plus the moderator. 5 made their direct living off of property taxes (2 school administrators, 2 library administrators and a Mayor), 1 made their living working with entities that receive tax dollars (a lawyer) and myself. If all the tables and forums had a similar makeup, the non-tax money recipient is grossly under-represented.
- I am 100% against library consolidation. We have a wonderful library here that we would like to keep exactly as it is. I want my library tax dollars to go to MY library - NOT to finance some building addition in another town that I'll never see, visit, or use. Likewise, I don't want to see some library board (commission, cabal) deciding what to do with our library and its grounds. Again - NO, NO, NO to consolidation.
- I received my property tax bill with an "explanation." The explanation requires more questions than answers, like "From 96th to County Line and Raceway Road to Carroll Road we are paying \$106,635,179 to welfare, 33% up from 7% in 2006." Why is that? Now I am all for helping people out but when we are doing it all for them, I have to disagree. These numbers are way off the board. Do these people have to qualify with a drug test? The original 7% to me should be a rough year let alone an incredible 33% of the property tax budget. How do we justify \$714.5 million for failing schools? How much is that per student that also pay for books and activities? I mean that should be paying for full ride scholarships. What is the tax increment finance? \$76 Million is a lot of money for not knowing what it is! And last but not least, Health and Hospital, I guess the city is covering my health issues and I will not be needing health insurance. My point is that we are paying the wrong people a lot of money to give us shoddy work in everything from the presentation of the tax bill that does not even show the exemptions/deductions to the way the money is spent. We have lost accountability at every level. If we were to give merit raises where they were deserved, then I think our government officials should be giving a paycheck not getting one!
- I do not support the consolidation of local units of government, such as schools and libraries. Please do not allow this to happen. We want to continue to have a voice at a local level. If consolidation is allowed, our rights will go with it.
- I attended the Franklin forum and appreciate the opportunity. I hope the powers that be listen. It is a good way to have it because everyone gets the chance to speak.
- I am concerned about corruption of the Child Protection Service in my county.
- I just heard that Indiana is going to consider consolidating libraries and schools. As a mom of two grade school children I am furious! I moved PURPOSELY to this small town to have my kids go to a small school. The teachers can give one on one attention to the students, everyone knows everyones parents, the drug problem is not as bad, and ours is one of the TOP schools in Indiana!!! I love our library, also. I don't want to drive 15 minutes to go to storytime or to check out books. I love that they know our names when we walk in and actually pay attention to us and help us when we need it! What the heck is wrong with Mitch Daniels? I don't care about tax decreases or whatever he is thinking at this point. I would rather pay HIGHER taxes to keep my school and library. Please hear me when I say NO CONSOLIDATION OF ANY SCHOOLS OR LIBRARIES. ESPECIALLY IN MY TOWN!!!! Signed, a mom and proud resident of a small town!!



- Please, please, please don't "reform" or "restructure" our public library. My family likes it just the way it is - kid friendly, adult friendly, educational and very responsive to our communities needs and wants.
- I would suggest that the state get the current property tax fiasco under control before attempting to "fix" anything. Then take the time to meet with the local government leaders and get their input. Your top-down management style is not going to work. If you do not get buy-in from the local units then you're doomed to failure. Remember, it was an attempt to "fix" the property tax issue in the first place that got yourselves into this trouble. The more you meddle in the local issues the more you will continue to mess things up. Learn from your mistakes with the current property tax issue. Help get the counties into compliance and stop the finger pointing. Lead by example and create a leaner state government. Make sure that any changes proposed will actually make the situation better for everyone, not just a few. After you gather all of your ideas from the local meetings, make sure that you invite every unit of government to the table for their input again. Find the holes that will inevitably come from the ideas and find solutions to "plug" the holes or come up with better ideas. Make sure that the "experts" working on this are reading all of the research and do not use a few research findings to make a change that will not work for all. And finally, do not rush the issue. I know that elected officials want the credit for fixing a problem. Unfortunately, this may not be the time to be looking for "pats on the back." Plant the seeds for change, make sure the ideas and discussion continue at all levels. Take the best ideas and make sure they are going to work before you "mandate" anything. Politicians love to mandate but then "run for the hills" or point fingers when it doesn't work. If it takes 5, 10, or more years to fully implement the ideas then let the process happen on its own accord. Change agents are there to keep the process going, not to force change upon everyone in a limited amount of time.
- One Southern Indiana is the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Corporation serving Floyd and Clark counties. We are combined and regional in nature, and one of our guiding tenets is consolidation and streamlining for efficiency. We strongly support and have publicly advocated for consolidating government services and for "uni-gov" actions to create one administrative entity overseeing all county-wide government services (one law enforcement entity, one fire district, one planning and zoning office, etc.) and one public school board for each county. I'm writing to express out desire to be a "test lab" for whatever recommendations come from the commission. We will take the Commission's recommendations and lobby for and work with local government officials for reform. Floyd County and New Albany have already taken some steps in that direction, and Clark County is similarly interested.
- Please don't take our small libraries away from us. So many children and adults won't be able to go to larger libraries with the gas prices the way they are. The bigger libraries would have to become larger to fill the need for so many new customers. I use the library in my town every week. I love to read, please don't take that away from me. Our children in small towns need to be able to walk to the library get there books, have book clubs, enjoy the books. Older adults that don't drive, we can't get the bus to take us to the next town to the Library. Our library is part of our town. Our librarian knows most people by name, you are always welcome there.
- I am writing to keep our library local. We do not want to combine it with the county library and lose services. We love our library as it is!!
- I have two suggestions on how to address the property tax problem. 1. WHY CAN'T SOMEONE JUST VOTE NO TO GOVERNMENT SPENDING?! Many times near the end of the year a department head will see they will have excess money in one account



so they ask for it to be transferred so they can pay for something else in another account. The attitude of decreased spending would result in two benefits: better planning and an excess of funds in some accounts which could be transferred to the following year, resulting in lower spending. The School Board, the Council or any other governmental board hold the purse strings. We need more than just the rubber stamp "yes." 2. Have the State order a separation of "General Funds" and "Special Bonds" on my tax statement so I can pay the bonds part off up front and "cut down on my property tax." A few years ago our county talked about building a new jail. During the public hearings the statement was made "If you owned a \$100,000 assessed property your tax bill would only go up \$35 per year for 20 years. If my math is correct that would be a total of \$700 over the 20 years. The point never mentioned was 1/2 of that amount would be the cost of interest on the bonds. In other words \$350 goes to the cost of the jail and \$350 goes to some rich guy who buys the bonds (tax free). WHY CAN'T I JUST PAY \$350 UP FRONT AND SAVE 50%? Don't tell me it would be too complicated to figure my tax bill. Every tax bill in the county is different. Granted not everyone would want to do this...but shouldn't we be offered the opportunity? Or are you the rich guy who makes money off buying the bonds?

- I believe that all township functions and local school districts should be consolidated. Also, voters should be given the opportunity to vote and approve or reject all major construction projects and bonding measures. We have given our schools more money every time they have asked and we now have very elaborate facilities, a well paid staff and the system is still failing and their answer is for more programs and more money. Somewhere it has to stop. It's time to put the education of our children back in the hands of the voters. Also, nonacademic spending is out of control. Parents should be responsible for the cost of these extra activities, not the taxpayers. Without voter control, spending will continue unabated and taxes will continue their upward spiral and the system we have of petitioning to stop these projects is difficult, unwieldy and virtually unworkable. Our only hope is for the State to do the restructuring as it will not happen at the local level and our local officials will be lobbying to maintain the status quo.
- 1. Eliminate patronage jobs. All government jobs should be civil service jobs obtained by passing a competency test. You could save a considerable amount of money just by hiring half the current staff who know what they are doing. 2. Eliminate township form of government, roughly \$135,000 per township could be saved by eliminating township assessor, trustee, and boards. The assessor's function should be taken over by the state to insure uniformity in property assessments. 3. In my county we have 7 County Council Members and 3 County Commissioners at a cost of approx \$275,000 annually. Combine these two groups into one five-member County Board. 4. Require that people running for financial offices such as Treasurer, Auditor, etc. have a solid background in this field. Currently, we elect an individual, pay them approx \$50,000 annually to carry the title, after which they go out and hire someone at \$50,000 or more to do the job. We are paying twice for the same job.
- 1. Schools, public safety and roads are the most important local government services. 2. For a healthy local economy and good quality of life we need to have sustainable communities with a diverse economy. Incentives for economic growth would be very helpful. 3. Eliminating township trustees unless it's a rural area defined by having an ALL-volunteer fire department. In my township, it's unincorporated, and we have a fire district that takes care of itself. The township trustee does not oversee the fire department. And, our urban, unincorporated township, has about 40,000 people!!! Our township trustee's duties are poor relief, maintain cemeteries, and weeds. His overhead expenses are about 6 times what he spends on poor relief. It's not efficient to have a township trustee in my township. 4. Eliminate township assessors and put under county



assessor. The state could help coordinate this. Possibly have a new position created "County Assessor Supervisor." 5. To improve efficiency and streamline government, put all the county, towns, cities, budgets into just one simplified/standardized form. That way, all budgets can be posted online or can be printed easily. This form must be easy to understand and provide clear information when taxes are increased, property tax rate, assessed value, indebtedness, revenue, etc. This change will provide vastly improved accountability. And, help local government units to compare their budget easily to others. 6. Consolidate smaller school districts. Any new buildings, any amount over \$1 million, for schools, should be on a referendum. This will give local control to the taxpayers. 7. Local government restructure: For any new development, have each plan commission do a cost analysis prior to approval to show fiscal impact to schools, local government. This would help local government work more efficiently, more like a business with an eye for the bottom line. 8. For better oversight on local government spending: require local governments to consolidate large, regular purchases such as all stationary, paper, copiers, govt cars, cell phones, etc., into 1 or 2 times a year. What happens at the county level is each dept. makes purchases independent of the other departments. This is not efficient use of taxpayer dollars. 9. Encourage regional purchasing with incentives or discounts. I had read that insurance for schools and local government might be combined. This might require a new state law. 10. Oversight of School Corporations: Johnson County has 6 school corporations. Do we have one county-school administrator to oversee their budgets? 11. Offer state to share responsibility of the state roads with the county. The state and county could share cost or the county could be reimbursed. The county or local government is closer to the problems of maintenance and can put roads on a regular maintenance program that can save tax dollars because of closer attention. And, local residents can become more involved at the local level. 12. Last suggestion: Find creative ways to take advantage of the almost record level of volunteers that exist in our society today. We all have read about the future baby boomers getting older. These people can be asked to help with local services, coordination, information gathering, distribution, etc. In return, offer them credit on their tax bills, vehicle licenses, college credit (for younger volunteers).

- Any governmental entity that has taxing authority ought to be subject to elections. The people who tax need to be elected by citizens, not appointed. Secondly, we do indeed have too many layers of government, too many government employees in state and local governments. Something needs to be done to decrease the number and the duplication.
- Bill Gates is spending millions to start smaller high schools because they are better for the students. Now Indiana wants to consolidate schools so we can have more monsters like Penn-Harris-Madison. I wouldn't want a child of mine in a place like that. No one knows anyone outside a small circle. Think Columbine!! I am adamantly opposed to school consolidation. Consolidating libraries is an even dumber idea. Small towns with poor people need libraries. Think of the people who have been motivated to do something with their lives because they had access to free books. I also oppose consolidating small libraries. If the governor wants to consolidate government, how about getting rid of some of the townships. Counties now do most of the work that these obsolete units used to do. I've heard all of the self-serving arguments and they are totally baseless. I was raised in Michigan where townships were abolished with the new state constitution. Guess what - everyone that needed help still was able to get it. I also suggest that you look at sacred cows - I'm sure that Indiana has a few of those that could easily be sacrificed and no one would notice.
- We should keep real property taxes as part of the tax base because they are progressive and stable. The data records kept by the assessors provide information



needed by site selectors, public and private parties for proposed construction, land planning, etc. Property taxes should be used certainly to fund roads, fire and police protection, sewers, area planning, redevelopment and other such items that are locational in nature. Schools and other governmental could be removed from property tax rolls and funded by other taxes. Township assessors and for that matter all township government should be abolished. A qualified and appointed county assessor should be put in charge of all assessments. At minimum remove all duties and funding for township assessors or have them assist the county assessor in supporting and not decision-making roles.

- Township assessors should be abolished and all of these responsibilities should fall to the County Assessor's office. State government needs to review the licensing and certification process required for individuals who would consider running for county assessor. Were the state government to move in the direction of abolishing township trustees altogether, the state must insure that some agency of state or local government assume the institutional responsibilities of this layer of local government organization. We must put the brakes on local spending and borrowing, across the board. cooperative purchasing for health insurance and commodities would save money. Provide uniformity and accountability in local government budget review procedures.
- A local Tax Advisory Council is developing a base line using three important principles, Equity, Efficiency, and Adequacy to help solve the current tax crisis. They have found that homeowners and small business proprietors have difficulty understanding Indiana's new personal property assessment system, there is a problem with historic properties trended with newer properties, and seniors have expressed worry over their inability to afford the homes they own and are uncertain about retirement.
- Eliminate all county and township assessors and their helpers. Cut county and city council to three members. Cut school board members to five members of the 350 schools. Cut all superintendents in schools and let the principal run the schools. Start cutting state government. Add everyone to sales tax: churches, farmers, and trucking companies. Tax alcohol. Abolish property tax. Sales tax is the only fair tax on the ability to pay.
- These are the ABCs of responsible government: A. Accountability (full disclosure) of the budget, spending, voting records of every person receiving a government check. B. Business development by utilizing our American Free Enterprise System to lower taxes. Tax dollars are derived from profit and hard work--not from abatements, handouts, or a multitude of government programs. C. Communication of the common good by using common sense supported by research and experience. It is far better to educate and inspire the public rather than legislate and regulate.
- Reform and consolidation: We need as few redundant and overlapping government bodies as possible; townships should go. In order to provide the best government possible, restructuring must be accompanied by 1) ethics, 2) openness, and 3) transparency. State government should mandate a basic ethics framework for local government (towns, counties, school and library districts, etc). Local bodies would be able to add to that framework. Citizens should have recourse to an arbitrator at the state level. Local government needs to work diligently to maintain and enhance their public process (better adherence to public notice laws, encourage public participation, and use the press to provide public notice and information. Local bodies should provide meeting information on a web page, including contact information, geographical areas of their jurisdiction, financial information, etc. Property taxes should reflect the purchase/investment price plus improvements. School districts should be controlled by



the states. Counties should be barred from spending public funds on lobbying. Publicly-funded "economic development" organizations should be open and transparent.

- In my opinion, don't cut government spending. Of the \$2,550 taken as my tax, the County got \$242. I think you should cut school spending. The school got \$2,098 of my tax dollars or 82%. I think you are looking in the wrong place.
- Streamline government by removing township offices and moving them to the county level. Move away from property taxes for schools to a state level tax, such as sales tax, to fund basic education programs. Allow for funding of the extras at the school level. For example a local sales tax for the travelling sports/band/etc. programs. Limit property taxes to only basic city/county services, such as fire and library.
- I have recently heard that part of your efforts to make local government more "lean" might include the consolidation of libraries. I hope this isn't true.
- The only way to solve the property tax crisis, or any money crisis, is to cut spending. Everything gets more expensive; we must look for ways to cut costs. Welfare is a huge one; find a way to encourage people to get off it, and become productive people. Non-profits do not need to be taxed. That's a slippery slope that will only lead to more problems. Libraries do not need to be closed or consolidated; they take so little tax money now. Schools need to spend their money on academics, not sports. Government jobs should be streamlined so no money is wasted; no cushy perks that anyone else wouldn't get. Pork projects are so annoying. Let them find their own way to make money. That's not what government is for. Trade the property tax for sales tax, at least the consumer can control it that way.
- I know that there is a big push to consolidate services in this state. I feel very strongly that too much consolidation of services takes away local control of these services. Who better knows what a local community needs than the people who live there. I know you are looking into ways to save money in this state. Saving money is fine but if you begin to cut into the quality of life of a community then it has gone too far. The state of Indiana is already losing a lot of people to other states. Let us be very careful that we don't drive even more people from this state by being foolish. I am particularly concerned about the possibility that you may consider consolidating libraries in Indiana. We are fortunate that Andrew Carnegie was so forward minded as to help put libraries in our local communities. Libraries are such an important learning resource for all members of our local communities. We live in a small community. Our library will soon be celebrating 100 years. Our library is a very important part of our community. Having our library puts the world at our fingertips. It expands our horizons. Our library is there for everyone. It is a place to meet old friends and make new ones. It is an integral part of our community. Our town would not be the same without "Our Library." Our family goes to our library at least two times a week. Many children and adults walk to our library every day. If we go to a county wide library system we would not be able to do this. With gas prices as high as they are it would be a real inconvenience for us to go to another library. Please, recommend that we keep our library system as it is. We need libraries in our local communities to keep our people educated. Keeping Indiana citizens educated and informed is much too important. If we close our local libraries ignorance will prevail!
- If I can save \$1.3 million in one hour of looking over the appropriations, you guys can surely do better. Also: 1) Indiana government should ONLY purchase hybrid and biodiesel vehicle for state fleet 2) Indiana government should REQUIRE 1 E-85 pump at each gas station 3) Indiana government should replace all street lighting with high efficiency long-life bulbs. There I just saved the state a billion in energy consumption alone. What follows are what I find as frivolous accounts (numbers), their cost each, and the pages they are found in the Indiana List of Appropriations. Eliminating these would



save \$1,364, 881: 1000/100110--176,000, I-1; 1000/490770--22,500, 1000/100150--257,800, I-2; 6000/146600--50,000, I-3; 6000/160400--196,066; 6000/193100--22,000; 1000/498510--85,000; I-5; 1000/499810--17,313; 1000/105190--45,219; 2500/120200--233,155; 1000/731300--193,500; 6000/116700--40,453, I-12; 3490/127600--5,000, I1-14; 1000/166710--20,000, II-14; 6000/130000--875, II-15. You could combine 550 & 560 on page 15 of the agency summary into one agency. You could combine 616, 655, and 670 of the agency summary into 1 facility.

- We have read about the possibility of library consolidation in Indiana. Being county residents, we enjoy our newly renovated and beautiful historical library. It is a 5-minute drive for us, making it a great convenience. The library staff is friendly and helpful. The building itself is an asset to our community and we pride ourselves in the care of our town. We have enjoyed story hour with our youngest who is now 22 and have used the library multiple times throughout the years for pleasure and research. We have been blessed to have such a nice facility in our own town. If we were not to have our own independent library in our town, I would guarantee you we would not make the trip to another town for the purpose of using the library. We try to limit our trips with gas prices as they are, so we strongly urge you not to consider this consolidation. We are so pleased with our township public library and it would be devastating to forfeit this great service to our community.
- I am responding to unfortunate news I've heard regarding my library. I was made aware that there is now consolidation efforts being made. If you close it I would have to travel for my children to make use of a library. That is crazy. My family uses our library weekly. I certainly don't have the gas money to travel weekly. Should my children suffer for this? It is a very bad idea. I would not support this measure. Please do not close our library.
- To consolidate local libraries into bigger ones in larger cities is unfair to lower-income families. To have to drive to use library services may not be feasible for many. To make library services unavailable to everyone will go directly against what education experts have researched: reading enhances the life of everyone. To have library materials available close to home may boost the life and class of individuals, making Indiana's people better educated, which in turn has countless positive benefits. The government of Indiana can and should find alternative ways of "saving" money. **DO NOT CLOSE OUR LOCAL LIBRARIES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- Letter about the state's proposed library reform in my county: We have lived in our town since 1999, moving here from another county. One of the things we cherish about our town is its library. My entire family uses the library's services -books, MANY audio tapes, videos, story hours, and my oldest child now uses it to study at. The Friday night movies in the park are wonderful for our town, gathering sometimes a hundred people of all ages to watch family movies outdoors for free. Our library's hours are wonderful and the location is local and easily accessible. My family saves hundreds of dollars a year by checking out movies and books on tape at the library. We come from a large library system that had absolutely no community participation on a local level. A great new, larger building was built in our previous county. It was great to drive to but neither town's residents could walk to their library anymore. So much for the kids who used to use the library. Both both cities of the combined library lost out on the decision to combine libraries. While the consolidation makes sense from a structural standpoint (less buildings, less staff, less cost), it isn't what the citizens want to see happen. Please consider listening to the citizens of the communities you are affecting rather than looking at this from a structural standpoint. Our library is a LOCAL treasure and LOCAL issue. Both the city and the county keep their libraries very busy. If it comes down to money - why don't you figure out how to pass some of the library cost to the local patrons instead



of involving the county and state government? The state has an obligation to let a successful library system run itself (which it has done successfully) without their interference. Even when our library suffered a HUGE financial blow due to a local corporation's not paying their property taxes, the library still found a way to successfully serve their communities. If you choose to consolidate the library system into one, aren't you creating a much larger governmental system that isn't needed, one that costs the taxpayers more money in the long run? YES. Our library system has not asked for the county's assistance. Please let the library system stay as it is and not involve the county. I've seen first hand how the county's library system has failed its towns by being too large a system. By consolidating libraries with ours, you are going to create the same system – an impersonable system that isn't involved in the town it serves. The residents will suffer, not the rest of the county or state. It is this Commission's obligation to prove to the citizens of that consolidation is wanted and needed by the library patrons. We don't think it is needed- please leave us alone.

- Cities are always looking for more ways to get money for projects. Why does the General Assembly allow storm water tax and solid waste to be added to your property tax bill? What accountability is there to make sure all the monies collected go to that specific project? It is my understanding that Stormwater is not going for that purpose. The Marion County Treasurer sent a copy of "Where your 2007 Marion Property Tax Dollars Go" and I don't see Solid Waste or Stormwater listed. As a business owner you can't keep raising prices or your customers will go elsewhere. You have to stay competitive. This also applies to towns and cities. Do not give them a blank check and make them more accountable to the tax payers.
- We have too much duplication of services in Indiana government. We are being choked by all the taxes we have to spend to support all the departments of government. It seems like we as a society are living and working only to support government entities.
- Non-owner occupied [homemaker] that is my name rather than LANDLORD, which should go away like a bad word. We who own rental property, hence "homemakers" for tenants are being taxed unfairly. My retirement income from these properties is being reduced because I have to sell a property a year to pay the taxes. After I have them all sold, I'll probably be dead. So, Indiana has taken away everything I have worked for in my life. As a single parent, I should have stayed at home, gone on welfare, gotten food stamps, and Section VIII housing and would have had less stress and the same amount of disposable income.
- This email is to ask you, please do not continue forward with recommendations or actions that would cause the elimination or consolidation of small and mid-size public libraries such as my library. I rely upon this library for many of my needs and interests. If I was forced to go to other cities, not only would it be a major inconvenience but, it would have other repercussions such as increasing the amount of money I would need to pay for gasoline in order to drive the extra distances. If you ever visited my library, you would see how many other folks in this community also rely upon its existence. Every time I go there, it is bustling with people, young and old and in between, whose lives are enriched by the services it offers. Again, I urge you, please do everything you can to preserve these libraries and provide for their continue existence and expansion.
- Consolidate the county treasurer and county auditor function into a county controller function appointed by the county executive. Have the State Board of Accounts assist in this process. This should eliminate two elected positions and two separately operated fiscal offices. Set minimum standards for the person that may be appointed to the controller position. 2. If property tax remains, have all township assessing duties placed under the county assessor with as many assistants as needed only for the time needed.



This is to eliminate the township assessing duties and an associated position. 3. Consolidate the payroll/personnel function across government lines. Treat it as a payroll/personnel service much like business does. Eliminate all the separate payroll and personnel equipment, records and personnel for each of the separate offices. Business does this all the time now. 4. Consolidate the township abandoned cemetery maintenance responsibilities under the county and put it out at the county highway section. Have either as many crew cab pick-up trucks with trailers and work release persons do this during the mowing months, or contract it out as business does. If heavier earth working is needed at a cemetery, the highway section has such equipment. This would eliminate all the separate budgeting and contracting at the township level. Put in the new legislation a method to consolidate very small cemeteries into larger ones so that the taxpayers are not bothered over the next few centuries by small matters. 5. Consolidate purchasing for health insurance. Use the largeness of all the state and local units combined to negotiate a low price for health insurance. More market power. 6. Place poor relief under the Family Social Service Administration and then eliminate the township trustee office. They are not closer, better or more efficient but only marketed that way. Decide if poor relief is for emergencies or just additional welfare. Have the poor relief investigators be mobile in a county with limited voucher issuing authority. Computerize it all. 7. Reduce the burden on the justice system by legislating a Business Security Requirement for all full-time businesses handling cash. This is mainly retailers. Make it effective two years after enactment to give business time to respond to the requirement. This is to set a minimum level security system/camera/alarm requirement for such a business. The results of the system when a crime occurs are what should be established by the legislation. 8. Do not have an unelected government unit with tax levying authority. It is simply unfair to the citizens and taxpayers for unelected persons to have this power. 9. Standardize and modularize school construction. Have one architect statewide with a limited number of plans for all school districts. Build the unit for easy expansion. The grandiose competition with the taxpayer handed the bill must stop. 10. Combine the State Senate and House into unicameral legislative body. Think of all the money we would save with half as many legislators. 11. Examine the Scottsdale, Arizona model of a combined police/fire Department. This may work well for smaller civic units and save big time. 12. Establish Atterbury Consolidate Jail facility (or in any other prior military or state hospital facility) where any sheriff needing to hold a person could have them incarcerated on incarcerated basis. The sheriff decides who to send and when to move them back to the local facility all on his budget. The facility offers an incarceration service for the sheriff.

- I am attaching a series of editorials I have written dealing with government structural and finance reform. The following attributes should generally be considered in evaluating any tax system whether it is a property, income or other form of tax. An acceptable tax system should possess Equity. Equity generally refers to the fundamental tenet that persons similarly situated should be treated or taxed similarly. This is further distinguished by two concepts called horizontal and vertical equity. Horizontal equity means that a uniform rate of taxation is applied consistently on all persons within the same taxable class. For example, two houses with generally the same value, located in the same neighborhood should pay roughly the same amount of tax. If they do the tax is said to have horizontal equity. This form of equity does not exist if the two houses do not pay the same. In fact, this form of equity was part of the challenge before the Indiana Tax Court. Under the current assessment system, it's possible for two homes under the scenario described to actually pay different amounts of tax, based on depreciation and other variables. Vertical equity simply refers to whether or not the tax is based upon a person's ability to pay. To the extent that a given tax or tax system is based upon the



ability to pay, it is said to be progressive. If a given tax or tax system is not based upon the ability to pay, it is considered regressive. It should be noted that a tax system that violates horizontal equity cannot also possess vertical equity. An acceptable general tax system should have minimal economic effects. The better tax systems are imposed or designed in such a way so as to reduce their interference with or influence on economic decision making. In short, this simply means a system of taxes should not unduly discourage or encourage certain economic activities. Ideally, a general purpose tax should be neutral as it relates to investment, expansion or savings by individuals as well as by businesses. The degree to which our neighbors from Illinois are seen in Indiana seeking to purchase such things as homes to cigarettes in pursuit of lower taxes illustrates how a tax system can influence economic decisions -- in this case -- having an arguably positive effect for Indiana but a less than positive effect for Illinois. An evaluation of an acceptable tax or tax system will also consider its yield and certainty. Yield generally refers to a consideration of whether or not a given tax will produce a sufficient amount of revenue to support or sustain a given public purpose. Certainty refers to the predictability or reliability of its receipt. Not unlike revenues in the private sector, public sector revenue sources may be influenced by general economic conditions. Generally, property and sales taxes are considered to be more reliable for their yields as well as rate of collection than either income or excise taxes. Income and excise taxes have variable yields as well as collection rates that are influenced by many factors. An acceptable tax system should be efficient and effective in application and administration. The famous management consultant Peter Drucker once observed: "Efficiency is concerned with doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing." Drucker's sentiments truly describe this particular attribute for an acceptable tax system. In order to be efficient, administrative and collection costs should be kept as low as possible. The idea is simple. The less cost for overhead the greater the net public good that can be done with these public revenues. This tenet also speaks to our higher ideals in that it urges that a public revenue system be fair and non-arbitrary in its application. It should be designed so that the public ideal of accountability is served. Related to this is the idea that a finance system be relatively understandable in its application and operation. In short, an acceptable tax system should allow for a person with a reasonable amount of information to be able to ascertain the amount of their taxes in a given system. Finally, an acceptable tax system should consider the appropriateness of a given tax or public revenue source for a given level of government. Each level of government is constituted to deliver certain public goods or services. Some governments like school corporations or library districts exist to perform different missions than those of the State or Federal Governments. Appropriateness considers the relationship of the revenue source to the particular level of government and its purpose. Fundamentally, this involves thinking about what revenue source is best suited to pay for such things as fire and police protection. What revenue source or sources would be most appropriate to finance public capital investment? What revenue source or sources are best to support such activities as building code enforcement, parks and recreation, interstate or regional highway construction, or even planning and zoning. The appropriateness issue recently was explored when the State of Michigan enacted legislation moving its local public education finance source from property taxes and replacing it with revenue from sales taxes. Whether or not this move will prove to be the most appropriate form of finance for local schools remains to be seen. However, it does evidence a general willingness on the part of policy makers to examine this element in the public finance structure. To be sure, few people "enjoy" paying taxes much less the various other public revenue forms. Knowing this, governments generally and local governments in particular must continue to strive to provide the greatest level of public



services at the least cost. Policy makers, in support of this public good, must work to devise public finance systems that favorably serve the foregoing criteria. Peter Drucker is right. Public service as well as its finance structure must be constructed so as to do things right as well as do the right thing.

- David “Reinventing Government” Osborne and Peter Hutcheson have written a book that seems suited to Northwest Indiana’s growing concern for government efficiency. “The Price of Government: Getting the Results We Need in an Age of Permanent Fiscal Crisis,” offers new ways to look at making government more effective and efficient in the climate of profoundly strained resources and undulyburdened taxpayers. Further, the release of the first reports from the Government Efficiency Study, Osborne and Hutcheson’s work seems especially relevant. The authors suggest that public officials should think about government services in term of price. They argue that pricing government in a manner in which a government can deliver services within its means and at a reasonable price, is more important than ever. Making this change requires relying on new data in budgetmaking and a new mindset by budget-makers. Thinking in terms of pricing government services rather than simply fixing tax levies is an interesting model. Using personal income data as a proxy for GDP, this idea involves fixing the levy burden as a percentage of personal income, which translates to price for public services. The idea may be worth exploring. It is possible that it could lead to a fairer burden for taxpayers. To further manage costs, the authors suggest employing a form of smart sharing, they call smart merger. Using a boating metaphor, they distinguish the “steering” of an organization from the “rowing” – the place where the service is delivered. The most successful smart sharing, producing the greatest efficiencies comes when funding sources and the steering function are more closely aligned. This avoids creation of unwanted, so-called mega bureaucracies. Smart sharing calls for combining some functions without resorting to political consolidation. Public officials are increasingly tasked to do more at lower cost. Smart sharing could produce lower cost of service, maintain or improve service quality while preserving community independence. Communities might share tax base, share functional assets, or both with the goal of delivering better service at lower cost. In some ways, smart sharing is an idea as old as Scriptures. Finally, Osborne and Hutcheson urge incorporating “smarter work processes” to more effectively deliver public services. If done properly, work processes get reconceived while allowing the customer (the taxpayer) to define quality. Sometimes this is called business process re-engineering. In fact, Congressman Visclosky’s Good Government Initiative employs business process re-engineering techniques to achieve smarter work processes. An often expensive, cost-prohibitive technique, having private resources to support this approach makes what would otherwise be unaffordable for most local governments, nowavailable as a promising strategy for improved public service. Of course in all these strategies, there must be consideration of certain equities –fairness and related issues. No reform will be sustained without consideration of the context of democratic values and ideas in which these reforms must work. Further, any reform that achieves efficiency without effectiveness, will notendure. This, I think, is what famed management thinker Peter Drucker meant when he wrote: “Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right thing.” Here’s hoping that our public services and the strategies by which theyare made better will be guided by Drucker’s insight: more doing things right and more doing the right thing.
- I moved to my town 6 yrs ago and I am always amazed at the public traffic at the our library. The parking lot and side streets are always full, additional parking had to be added to accomodate everyone. That alone should tell you that this Library is needed in my town. Especially families, retirees and students are using this library very much. Please do not close the our library. You would do a great dis-service to this community.



- I think there should be an education requirement for our local offices, and less of them. Zoning rules are a nightmare in both nearby counties. Just talk to any home builder/developer. I hope you will have your meetings again with more citizen input.
- Here are some suggestions that I would like the commission to consider, especially in my County: 1. Either abolish the property tax or limit it to 1% assessed property value. 2. Consider an alternative tax such as the Value Added Tax (VAT). There are negative effects of the raising the sales tax to make up the difference if we abolished property tax. The VAT would avoid that. I believe Dick Lugar supported the VAT when he ran for president. 3. Eliminate township government. This is a redundant form of government that is costly and has little accountability. I'm sure this will be a difficult political fight, but a public education campaign would be essential to disclose the costs of multiple layers of government. 4. Part of the high taxes revolved around public schools. I propose that my County Schools be assigned to the current township limits (perhaps this is one area of township government that may be worth saving.) Our local school system could be limited to one Township or that township could be entirely made up of charter schools to meet the unique needs of each neighborhood. 5. Let's look at countywide transportation. Take all the money spent in the townships on buses and create a strong public transportation system that all citizens can use, both students and others. We can have bus monitors ride the bus during school travel times, have all schools on the same schedule which will make after care programs more consistent for working parents. 6. Part of the costs to citizens is to support health care systems such as local hospital and child welfare programs. Let's be progressive in Indiana and create a state insurance program for all. Let's reform our healthcare so there is affordable health care for every citizen. We can all pay into it and choose the healthcare system that provides the best care for our needs.
- I feel that the consolidation of our Indiana Public Libraries is a poor idea. My company works with close to 100 Indiana Libraries as well as Libraries in other states. From what I have observed working with libraries in Michigan, Georgia, Illinois, Wisconsin and Mississippi, is that the Indiana libraries far better off.
- For our population, there are simply too many counties. Each of these maintains offices, police and fire, send representatives to Indianapolis, etc. This effort at local control may have been justified in 1850 but is simply inefficient today. Set a population target and consolidate counties.
- Within the counties, the township structure is an example of costs that I can't rationalize or justify. I don't know why we have township trustees, with individual local offices. Eliminate the township governance structure. Probably the best example of a township office that needs replacement is that of township assessor. To rationalize the process, centralize it. Eliminate the office in Indianapolis that presumably calculates the tax rate. At a minimum, if that office can't complete its work to allow timely property tax bills, they (the state) should be responsible for borrowing costs incurred by the schools and local government. Even at the county level the way we elect officials leads to self-interest and inefficiency. As an example, while the flow of work related to the county assessor, county auditor and treasurer would call for cooperation and presumably accountability, each official is elected and accordingly is accountable to the electorate. While it sounds good, there is no incentive for any office to cooperate with another office in that it could result in the reduction of staff, budget, etc. for "my" unit. It would be more efficient if these people reported to a central manager, etc. While another example of the emotional call for local control, I support the consolidation of library functions within a county. I would hope that this would increase and bring parity to the resources available to the residents of a county. It would seem appropriate for tax exempt properties to at least



pay a fee to support police and fire protection. I might argue that street lighting, street cleaning and maintenance, etc. are also reasonable costs that should be allocated to the exempt property. Where the exempt property is sold, should not the abated taxes be recovered for perhaps the past two or three years?

- I think outsourcing may be a good idea and it is worth doing the experiment. Similarly, the lease of the turnpike may be a good idea but we will not know the impact until the end of the lease. While still in need of improvement, BMV is at least attempting to improve. INDOT is another agency in desperate need of improvement. If you watch the teams of men “work” the need for improvement is quite evident. One man’s a tool and six stand and watch. The commitment to safety is admirable; however, again, trucks are manned and simply sit on the edge of the road as an apparent barrier to a crew further ahead. Mowing along highways could undoubtedly be done more efficiently by private contractors.
- Please do not consolidate or do away with my public library. It has been a great asset to our family and community. Children are thriving in education in part as a result of the local library. My son is four and a half and has a love of reading that will take him anywhere he wants to go in life. This begins at the local library. I grew up without having a local public library that was free for me to use. I am thankful that my son has that door open to him.
- We are in favor of consolidating some aspects of our state government and applaud efforts to reform government spending. However, we are concerned regarding the proposed mandatory consolidation of local libraries. We live in a rural community and for over 30 years we have availed ourselves of the services provided by our local public library. Our library was recently renovated and an addition was added doubling the square footage and making our library handicapped accessible. Computers and complete automation were also added. If we were to lose our local library it would be a great loss to our community and a terrible inconvenience to its patrons. The other county library would be over 15 miles away and the distance involved would create a tremendous hardship and invalidate the use of the building for students doing homework, senior citizens without transportation, etc. Our programs, services and circulating collections are determined by a local 7-member board which reflects the needs and desires of our community. We hope the Commission considers consolidation of local libraries on a case-by-case basis and realizes the best interests of the communities involved is of paramount importance.
- When we elect officials we trust that they will be watchful of our dollars. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and we get saddled with some who enjoy spending the big bucks. The public has two recourses: recall or remonstrances. These truly are useless. They take too long and upset the communities in profound ways. I believe you must seriously consider giving the citizens the right to hold referendum votes on capital projects, and operating expenditures that will exceed certain amounts. Let the officials propose; let the citizens depose. We need the Referendum Vote to stop county spending that is not supported by the voters.
- The real property taxes in some townships in Indiana counties are outrageous. Come up with a fair and equitable system. Everyone pay for the services they get, it is only fair!!!
- I wish to make it known that I am very much against the consolidation of libraries in Indiana. When my family moved to town of 6 years ago, one of the highlights was knowing that we now had a library close by and that we could use without paying a fee to get a card. This is a great library with quality books and services. My children have attended storytime here as well as many other children's programs, and we check out a



wide variety of materials. Why should I have to drive 20 minutes away and pay for a library card when I have all I need right here? The Public library is an important part of our town, and I certainly hope it stays that way.

- Don't try to fix something that isn't broken, which is the my library. Work on something like the property tax issue.
- Do not consolidate small or medium size libraries! We use our LOCAL library three to four times a week for books and videos. Our local library has been the hugest asset in my children's reading capabilities and desires to read. I feel you should consolidate the "bigger" town libraries into one establishment. South Bend/Mishawaka for instance has several small branches - consolidate all of these into one. Why take away one library from a town when some cities have several to choose from? My kids and I would feel totally lost without our local Bremen library. With the cost of gas and just the amount of time to travel we couldn't utilize another libraries facilities as often. Both of my children just got their own library cards. They would go to the library after school everyday if I had the time. The loss of the summer reading program would be another reason - they look forward to that every year. Please, find another solution. The loss of our library would be terrible to my family let alone the whole community !! Please check into other avenues before even traveling down this one.
- We are writing you to protest the consolidation/elimination plans for (1) middle-size and small public libraries and (2) schools with enrollment under 1,000 in the State of Indiana.
- I am opposed to the consolidation of any library in Indiana. The public libraries in each town are vital to its community. They provide a wealth of knowledge that will be missed if consolidation happens. There is no need to consolidate so please do not.
- I vote NO in regards to closing the our Public Library. This library is busy all year round. Reading is the most important thing you can teach a child. Don't take this jewel from the community!!
- Please do not let consolidation of libraries take place.
- I am in favor of property tax being permanently repealed by a constitutional amendment, in which we eliminate ALL assessors offices. Replace revenues with sales and income tax, a legal cap placed on government spending at the growth/inflation rate. Consolidate school administrations on a county or bi-county level and restructure pyramid layers of government eliminating duplication of functions.
- Save our libraries.
- My township Public library does not want to be a part of a large system. We love our library!
- Leave us our Township library system and let us run it as we see fit.
- I and many of the patrons of the our Library see no need to consolidate our library into a larger system. More government intervention would not make it better or cheaper to run.
- Please don't close the my Library.
- I do not object to paying real estate taxes, or any other taxes, as long as they are reasonable and equitable, and other people and businesses pay their fair share. I believe a higher income tax and/or a higher sales tax would hurt low-income people much more than high-income people, and I hope those measures are not used.
- I am opposed to the plan to consolidate our library.
- I have read the article in the Newspaper and agree with everything she set out in her excellent article. I would not want to see the my library become a branch of some conglomeration of libraries.
- To consolidate, is to regulate and eliminate what makes us great. To consolidize, is to homogenize, diverse good-byes, same color eyes., etc. Against consolidation of libraries. Long live diversity, it's the American Way!



- I am writing in support of our local libraries in my county. I am against consolidation.
- I am writing to encourage you to think carefully before you consider consolidating the Libraries of Indiana.
- Please allow us to retain and maintain our library system and its activities as they now exist.
- On behalf of all members of my department, I strongly oppose any decision that would result in the merger of the public library with the county library system.
- We strongly believe that our public library should be allowed to remain the strong, progressive, and independent library system it has always been.
- Please, we do not want the consolidation of libraries in our county.
- Please be wise and thinking leaders when determining the fate of our libraries. I am adamantly opposed to consolidation.
- Fixing inequity in assessments is now possible, literally within months--statewide. A firm step toward equity in real estate assessments can be found via an automated and completely local-market-based solution, developed by an Indiana company and co-authored by an Indiana University graduate and 2001 Churchill Scholar.
- I am against the library consolidation of our public library system into the larger county system.
- Consider talking to Eric Miller of Advance America about repealing property taxes.
- Government serves its people and its services should be specific to the needs of those people. Give us the freedom to work together within counties for interlocal agreements to provide services; to enter into purchasing consortiums; and to operate as efficiently as possible. Services mandated by the state and services provided by local government should be funded locally. Councils are the steering wheel, Mayors and Town Managers are the accelerator, and Clerk-Treasurers are the brakes. They have to remain independent so as to apply the brakes at the appropriate time. Small communities generally have a leaner and more effective (government) structure. Development of larger units of government creates a complex that loses accountability. Three critical changes are: enabling better use of financial information for management purposes, allowing cities and towns to exercise true constitutional home rule, and assuming greater responsibility and accountability to their constituents for generation and utilization of revenue to provide services that are locally generated and delivered. This includes the ability to establish locally (county-wide or by community) an income tax, sales tax, food and beverage tax, or innkeepers tax, etc.
- Abolish property taxes. Go to a sales or income tax. I do not want to see counties and school corporations have the authority to raise local taxes in addition to the State raising the sales or income tax. The state should divide the money among the counties and schools and the local governments would need to stay within their budgeted amount. Please cut spending.
- Please vote "NO" to consolidation of libraries.
- Please oppose the Governor's proposal to close libraries.
- I am against consolidation of libraries.
- I am against the library consolidation of the public library system into the larger county system.
- Please do not consolidate or eliminate small or mid-size libraries.
- Please leave my library alone.
- Combine all township and airport fire departments into the Indianapolis Fire Dept. Freeze the fire levy at the 2008 level for 3 years. Place the governance of all public safety services under the Mayor, as of 2011. Eliminate the office of the County Coroner by constitutional amendment and replace it with a regional medical examiner system



statewide, as of 2011. Make the salaries for Sheriff and Prosecutor the same, by 2011. Eliminate office of Township Trustees and Town Board, assign their current duties to county agencies, including assistance or poor relief services to the welfare dept. Establish a division of small claims courts within county superior court and maintain function and location within each township, as of 2011. Eliminate office of Township Assessor and replace it with a statewide assessment system, as of 2011. Combine the duties of elected offices of Marion County Treasurer, Marion County Auditor, and City Controller, as of 2011, and cross-train the staff. Impose a term limit of two 4-year terms onto the office of Mayor. Eliminate four at-large seats on the City County Council. Combine Township Constables with Civil Sheriff's into a Warrant Officer court service within superior courts. Hoosiers demand and deserve government services proportionate to what they pay in taxes.

- Please do not close down any more library branches.
- We support the Township Library and urge you to reconsider any consolidation.
- Please reconsider your proposal to consolidate libraries in my town.
- Please do not allow consolidation to happen. There is no logical, economical or political reason why libraries should be consolidated.
- Please stop consolidation (of libraries).
- Abolish all taxes on commercial and residential real and personal property, inventory taxes, excise taxes on any type of wheeled vehicle, sales taxes, taxes on gas, jewelry, sporting goods, alcohol, tobacco, and any other specialty products, estate taxes on private and commercial assets, business income taxes and licensing fees. Eliminate all govt. employees that assess, record, and administer the collection of taxes. Eliminate unemployment taxes and benefits and employees who administer these. Eliminate or reduce the number of public employees that don't provide a direct service that benefits all state residents. Pay wages and benefits to public employees that realistically reflect those on average in the private sector. No 20 year and out lifetime pensions, instead establish a 401K type policy with employee contributions with matching by employer that reflects private sector plans. Provide health care plans with a higher contribution by the employee more accurately reflecting private sector. Eliminate all Dept. of Education jobs that are not directly involved in the teaching of students and the maintenance of property. Also eliminate unnecessary property and stop funding on MAKE WORK construction projects. Consolidate schools. Increase the work year for teachers to 50 weeks. Incorporate life skill and non-academic classes for the summer months. Demand responsibility from parents and students. Eliminate social spending. No welfare or foster care benefits to offending individuals and their families. No food stamps. No subsidized housing. No free medical care. Eliminate the govt. employees that administer these benefits. Pass laws with fixed nonnegotiable long mandatory prison terms for violent crimes, robbery, burglary, theft, or vandalism, also manufacture and use of illegal drugs. Pass laws with mandatory prison terms for businesses that hire illegal aliens. Deport illegal aliens and their families. Provide free early morning, day, and evening daycare to parents of preschool and school age children, 365 days per year, in existing school buildings. Establish a flat percentage rate individual income tax on all types of personal income, ie. employment, interest, dividend, investment, gains on sale or inherited property, stocks, bonds, business assets. Levy the tax on all residents and non-residents obtaining income in state or from state sources. The income tax rate should be a flat percentage across the board between 5% and 10%. State law would require state and local governments to spend no more than what was collected. taxes collected would be distributed to counties based on population, development, infrastructure, school requirements, and special needs. Distributions to each county



would be approved yearly by a 2/3 majority in the House and Senate and signed by the governor.

- PLEASE do not consolidate. The local libraries are serving our needs very well, actually better than ever anticipated. PLEASE do not change what works!!!
- PLEASE PLEASE do not close our branch library. It is an excellent library and we use it 1 to 2 times per week and find it a great source of information and community exchange. All of our friends use it as well. The staff is especially helpful and knowledgeable. Again, please do not close this particular branch. It is loved by many.
- Please do not close our library. This library is invaluable to our community and to our family. It's important to have this excellent resource in our lives.
- As a citizen and a big user of the Public Library, I wish to encourage you NOT to force a consolidation of our library system with others in our area. Our library is outstanding, not only in the materials which it offers to its constituents, but also in the vast variety of programming for all the members of the community. To show the support of the citizenry, when the local tax funds were all but decimated by the bankruptcy of a local large corporation, the staff was cut to about ten, but more than 100 volunteers kept the library running until tax dollars became available. Several of those volunteers were subsequently hired as part-time employees. Through our library, we now have a Historical Museum, which has grown to where it now inhabits an historic building (provided by the School Corporation for \$1 per year). This facility provides ongoing programs and special events throughout the year. We would not want to give up all of our programs which we have developed and which could happen with a consolidation. Please allow us to continue to offer and grow within our own community.
- I am a member of an Historical Association appointed by unanimous vote to contact you regarding our concerns about library consolidation. Our county is unique, the north urban the south rural. Our population will limit us to one member on a consolidated board consisting of citizens focused on the needs of an urban constituency. Two prime examples, our nature trail and extensive availability of historical information. Our nature trail was constructed and is maintained by local donations and volunteers and library staff. It is extensively used by Scouts, 4-H, schools and nature groups. To cut the funds necessary to maintain and improve the trail would be a disservice to our patrons. One staff member has documented and cataloged the history of our county and answers questions daily from throughout the United States. We are concerned that the time required to continue to expand the site and answer queries would not be seen as necessary in a consolidated system. We have two branch libraries serving less than six hundred people. The small communities had their schools demolished and the library is the only place where a sense of community can be maintained. The historical association views maintenance and sustenance of these areas as vital to their ability to continue as a resource of historical data. The small amount of tax dollars used to maintain our library will be increased with consolidation. Our library will be debt free in three years, consolidation means we will help to pay for the new construction of other libraries in the system and we will also have to pay a disproportionate share of taxes to offset those in the north part of the county who do not pay their taxes as evidenced by the extensive number of properties listed as tax delinquent.
- I think it will be a big mistake to consolidate our Public library with a larger library in a larger town. Then we would have no control over our system. Most of the older citizens can not travel to other towns and this way they can at least walk or have the librarians bring them some books. We have newspapers and magazines, movies, books, and the librarians also have story time for the little ones. In the summer, we have the summer reading time, which I always enter, I learned what I know on the computer here at the



library. They offer many other hobbies to learn here at the library. It would be a shame to consolidate with another library. I have been coming here for 50 years and really enjoy talking to the librarians. They seem to know what I like to read and also are willing to help me when I need help. Please do not consolidate my Public library with another one in another town. I may not be able to go there as much as I go here, and I certainly enjoy coming here.

- I would like to see property taxes eliminated permanently, repealed by a constitutional amendment, eliminating ALL assessor offices. Replace the revenue with sales and/or value added tax. Restructure the multiple layers of government eliminating duplication of functions.
- My family and I are greatly concerned about the possibility of local government restructuring which would involve the consolidation of small and mid-size libraries in the state of Indiana. We live in a relatively small community and would be significantly affected by such reforms. Our library is an integral part of community life. The library provides excellent services to all of us. The experienced, friendly staff make each visit to the library a profitable and pleasant one. Many educational programs are conducted which valuably supplement our children's education. My children have been involved in the Youth Chess Club, which meets weekly at the Public Library. Normally, the opportunity to belong to such a club only happens through the public schools; therefore, our homeschooled children have benefitted greatly by this program which the library offers. My oldest daughter, who is an avid reader and has an interest in someday becoming a librarian, volunteers four hours of her time each week at the Public Library. Not only has she learned about library work and interacting with children in programs such as storytime, she has also increased her confidence in interacting with others and being a responsible worker. This opportunity for my daughter has been invaluable, especially since she tends to be a shy person. Additionally, our family makes a weekly visit to the library, which is only ten minutes away, to borrow books, CDs, books on tape, and DVDs or videos. All of these things are an integral part of our family life. I am asking that you please do not recommend a consolidation of independent libraries in Indiana. I think such a course of action would have a negative effect upon our community as well as other communities like it.
- Please leave our local library alone. We have a great library and do not want to go into a countywide library. That would be a big mistake. We have a great librarian. We do not need government telling us what to do and what books to have in our library.
- Please stop the consolidation of libraries. Please don't let Gov. Daniels dictate what you do. Everyone is so focused on achieving better education for our children, and now you are going to go and eliminate small and mid-sized libraries? Something doesn't make sense. We all know that children who are read to do better in school and now you are considering eliminated libraries. I personally know many families who live where there is no library close to them and the closest one is in another county, so if they want to go to that library they have to pay to have a card to use it! They pay taxes, too! So sad that their library is not convenient and now you want to make that situation for lots of people? Get your priorities straight!
- Duplication of efforts is not good within our county. It is costing too much in Property Tax Money. We need at least reciprocity arrangements with all the libraries in the county!!!
- Taxes are out of control. We need a government who is willing to make the hard choices, and truly provide what is NEEDED and not all these WANTS. There is a huge difference. You've spend enough time "studying" changes. Start making them. We have an old saying in industry, "there comes a time when you have to shoot the engineer and start production." We taxpayers are in desperate need of relief from the inefficient,



ineffective, and wasteful government. Cut it back to bare bones. If the people footing the bill (i.e., NOT the people standing there with their hands out) all agree that we should replace something, we will vote on it. Hey, that's a good idea, let's only give the right to vote to people who actually pay taxes. Maybe the handouts would stop. I don't have time to make the list of waste you have in our government. That is why I pay the salaries of elected officials. If it's now my job to find all the waste in the government, then I don't need elected officials anymore, and you all can just go home. Do your job!!! Find the waste and eliminate it, NOW!

- I oppose the consolidation of public libraries. Let me tell you what the library means to my family. We have no public library. We pay a yearly fee to use the Public Library. For our family, the use of a library is important enough for us to pay to use it. The convenience of having a library ten minutes away is great! This library is not even in our county but the closeness of it is important to us. A library in our county is twenty minutes or more away. We use our library for many things. Not only do we check out books, but we use the Internet, check out videos, books on tape, newspapers and magazines just to name a few services. We visit our library at least once a week. When my children were little, we went to the story times they offered. Now we are involved in the summer reading programs. I am a preschool teacher. I check out books to use in my classroom. I also use the die cut machine there for my classroom. I also make use of the books on tape. I find the library staff a great help in keeping me up to date on the newest books to use in my class. My children use the library for school research. The library at school is limited in what they have. They also have limited hours. Using our public library solves both of these issues. We find the necessary books to complete a project. Using a library has encouraged my children in their love of reading. They check out many books just for pleasure reading as well as reading on a favorite current interest. If I had to buy each book that they read, I would not be able to provide them with the amount of books that they have read from the library. It is almost unbelievable to me that library consolidation is even being considered. In a time when all you hear about is test scores, encouraging our children in their education, how far behind we are in educating our children, the committee is considering taking away an important source in educating our children. My fear is more children will turn to TV, video games and movies to fill their time. This is not what is needed for our children. I taught my children and currently teach my preschoolers to develop a love for reading. Reading can take you places in your mind that you may never get to go! It may be a place in reality or in your imagination! Reading is great fun! I hate to think that our government officials may not feel reading is as important. How disappointing. I can understand consolidating libraries in larger cities that have several branches but it does not make sense to close the libraries in the smaller communities especially ones like us in rural communities. Not only is the library used as a library but it is used as a meeting place in the town. There are not many places large enough to hold public meetings. The library services many needs in the smaller towns. It can often be the hub of the town. I also appreciate how our library reflects the values of our area. We are a conservative area. The library staff understands that and keeps that in mind when purchasing books. This is not to say we do not have a wide variety of books. They make the best use of their money by purchasing books that actually get checked out. Because of the smallness of the community, they actually listen to their patrons. They truly do serve their patrons. After reading this, I hope you will reconsider the consolidation of smaller libraries into larger systems. I, along with my husband, will be monitoring how the voting goes on this issue.
- This letter is concerning the possible closing of my township library. I strongly urge you to not close our library. I am the mother of two girls my oldest loves to walk to our library to borrow books, DVDs, VHS movies, etc. There are many families in our community that



cannot afford to drive out of town to go to the library. Some of these families do not own cars. Also we have a lot of older citizens that do not or cannot drive out of town. I feel that this would be a travesty to close our Public Library. Many families choose to borrow movies from the library versus going to the video store to save money or because the budget does not allow it! If this committee decides to close our library I can guarantee that Governor Daniels will no longer receive my support/vote.

- Please do not consolidate our public libraries.
- Please help to keep our library in the hands of local residents, we need our library and the wonderful museum it displays.
- Consolidating or closing the library would not be an advantage for people, but rather a disadvantage for the community.
- The Public library is the best institution in all of my County and needs to stay that way. Please do not consolidate this library with the county's library.
- We are totally against library consolidation.
- We would like to ask you not to close or combine our libraries.
- Please don't take away our public library.
- Please slow down on any immediate action on consolidation issues, or property tax changes until all solutions have been presented to the public.
- We oppose the consolidation of libraries.
- I'm opposed to the consolidation of the libraries.
- Please do not recommend the mandate to consolidate library systems.
- The only possible way to correct the current tax debacle is through a Constitutional process to permanently repeal property tax, force government to place a legal cap on spending not greater than the growth inflation rate and start managing the affairs of the people with sound business management instead of just spending what they want. Roll back property tax bills to the payable 2006 level. This stays in force through 2010, taxes to be paid in 2011. Increase Sales Tax by 1%. Close all township offices and transfer responsibility of sending bills to the county. Voters vote to approve Amendment to repeal taxes.
- I've just learned that my local library may close. This concerns me because it is 15 miles to the next library. There are many low-income families in my area and they have limited access to books. It would be hard to get books for my child if the library was out of the way. Please keep my local library opened.
- Please don't close my local library.
- I think there was a general consensus at the forum I attended that local libraries should not be abandoned; perhaps there could be a sharing of administrators with larger libraries or even local schools. After talking at our table and hearing the reviews, I now think that townships government may serve little purpose, although there were concerns expressed that there might be additional costs to local government if the volunteer firemen were eliminated. The comment that got the most applause was something like: "the state administration better work to be more efficient before putting too much emphasis on the local governments."
- The structure of Indiana government should indeed be improved. The duties of the township layer should be looked at and possibly assumed by another entity. The exception I would make would be with schools and libraries. It is very important that these bodies remain under local control.
- Is this "Reform" program a legitimate program? Prove it! Bring ethics back! Look closely at County Sheriff Departments and how commissary income is spent. Jail commissary accounts collect record profits as a result of increasing numbers of inmates, along with the profits from inmate's phone calls. Legislation provides sole authority to the Sheriff as



to where and how these monies are spent no matter the amount available. Sheriff's may use these monies for public relations, no bid purchases from political supporters, political reward in the guise of training at resort areas, overseas travel, yearly purchases of state-of-the-art equipment from political campaign donors, self-promotion materials, etc. Our legislature should, at the least, consider limits on the amounts that Sheriff's spend without any bids or approval of other fiscal government bodies. And, commissary income and expenditures should be publicized along with the jail and enforcement budgets of Sheriff's Departments. Comparison should be made to the expenditure amounts by previous administrations and to the accounting of these expenditures. Furthermore, we need legislative reform on the antiquated laws that allow Sheriff's to receive a percentage of the tax monies collected in addition to their high salaries. Counties that have contracts are now experiencing problems of unscrupulous Sheriffs taking both the high contract salary amount and the extra percentage of delinquent tax money collected. (currently legal but certainly unethical). Also, there should be legislative review on why Sheriffs, unlike other elected officials, are not obtaining PERF pensions instead of cannibalizing merit officer's pension plans. Finally, it is ludicrous that the legislature refused to deal with these issues and also the fact that Sheriffs salaries are based on a percentage of the prosecutor's salary--when the Sheriff's educational requirement is only high school. Instead, the Indiana legislature created their own modified version of this idea for themselves--tying their salaries to the judicial branch. These types of legislative reforms could seriously impact the financial situation throughout this state. Perhaps our property taxes would not have to be raised! Also, instead of "power grabs" that eliminate elected offices, try cutting expenses! It is disgusting to see our elected officials take an entourage with them at taxpayer expense. Limit elected official so that they are available to serve their constituents. Limit the number of conferences/training opportunities that they will attend in a year. Will they budget the use of public (whether tax monies or profits) funds in these areas to a reasonable amount? Mandate a minimum number of hours for an elected official to work on a weekly basis. (Will this be a 40 hour week, 20 hour, etc.?) Will they count attendance of public relation events as part of their work week(attending pancake breakfasts)? How many vacation days will they take a year? Demand that the requirement of public notice on regular public meetings be increased to beyond a 48 hours notice. They should be announced in the local newspaper and in a timely manner and with an agenda. If you cannot fix these few areas of the expenditures in public safety--how do elected officials expect us to trust them with anything else. When officials give out bogus statistics--stating that they "gave back" \$\$ to the citizens, then fail to reveal the amounts that they increased various budgets under their control, it is nothing but a shell game. Reference to I.C. 36-8-10-21.

- Please do not eliminate or consolidate our library system. It is the only cultural institution in this area, serving local residents.
- The rural Township trustee system is a relic of the past and needs to be eliminated.
- The recommendation considering the consolidation of public libraries would adversely impact users of local libraries: without better public transportation access to libraries would decrease, decreased local representation through board membership would impact programming and the client friendly attitude local institutions provide. Central bureaucracy could hinder how individual libraries could serve clients, and thus create a downward spiral of utilization.
- Schools and libraries are an extension of our family responsibilities to our children, our community and our future. Once you have taken responsibility away, you have taken authority, and control is lost. Our Constitution says: "Of the people, by the people and for



the people," not "government control." This consolidation effort would put our libraries under government control. NO to library consolidation.

- After reading Gov, Daniels proposal I am wondering what happened to exemptions on rental property.
- It amazes me that ANYONE would consider closing such a valuable resource as a library. Here are just a few of the services the local communities will lose: summer reading programs; adult education; computer/internet access for those who have none; preschool programs; and resources for college students. I find it difficult to believe that most parents would be willing to drive two to three times the distance (they are now) for their children to attend (what would become) overcrowded libraries and their programs. College students, young and old alike, will find their already slim budgets even more strained from the need to fill up (with gas) more frequently. A governor SHOULD guide and protect education. Closing local libraries IS NOT the way to do it!
- Should township/county property tax assessors be abolished in favor of a uniform process managed by the state?" NO! Local autonomy would be ripped away from the people who are the taxpayers. Absolutely NO to centralizing authority! 2. "What local units of government (including schools and libraries) might be successfully consolidated to reduce overhead and administrative expense?" Consolidation would not eliminate overhead and expense. Monopolies never save money, and consolidation is just a nice way of saying monopoly! We are writing to say that we, as taxpayers, highly resist the idea of consolidation. Local units of government should remain just that - local. Communities of people across Indiana differ in their needs and desires. Should township/county property tax assessors be abolished in favor of a uniform process managed by the state?" NO, remain local! If a community of taxpayers desires to consolidate, that choice should be left up to that community and not mandated by the governor. If a community of taxpayers does not want consolidation, it should not be forced upon them. Specifically, we do not want libraries consolidated. Leave that choice up to the people.
- Let's hesitate to consolidate; in bureaucratic reprobates; who pad the payroll ledgers; to honor campaign pledges. The library is a sacred place; where community is interlaced; each separate personality; each a different hospitality. To consolidate would regulate by those that govern state; a politica personality; would limit hospitality. Community foundations have their limitations; boards and overseers that live among their peers. Books have fostered liberty; a world of individuality; is a penny saved a penny earned or consolidation a freedom burned. A library is freedom's frontier; a liberty that we hold dear; governed by politics and state to consolidate a grave mistake.
- Now, more than ever is the time to tax pollution. We would hope that this tax is a disappearing tax. This is not about making money, it is about making the polluters better citizens. The state should pay for schools, child welfare, and healthcare for the indigent.
- Local government is good. Please leave it alone. All services are important. Do not change local government. State government needs to put their house in order. The state government needs to provide money to the local government to run. Stop mandating rules to county and city governments and then cut back on money. By cutting local representation for the people, you are developing a government not for the people. Please no new taxes.
- Give us a credit for the gambling casinos on our real estate tax. Allow us to make real estate tax payments monthly over twelve months.
- Classify all different township entities by population, rural, and towns so a decision can be made that is not one reform fits all. Set parameters for what is to be spent to determine township aid. These costs should include site inspectors and intake clerks



and should not exceed the amount of help given out. Also, a percentage should be allocated for overhead. All township parks located within a town should be eliminated and given to the towns, county, or sold. Township buildings and rentals should have an oversight so they don't become a "political payment." Some of the buildings currently rented could have been owned by the township for the cost of the year's paid rent. Advisory board members should receive no more than \$5,000/year for their public service. No insurance, cars, telephones, etc. should be provided. By setting parameters of pay and job description unnecessary and duplicate costs can be alleviated. Before the Commission makes any decisions, I would suggest they sit in at some of the Township offices and see first hand the effects of their actions. Assessors are very effective on residential properties with the data processing provided by the State. Commercial properties could be taken to a higher level of very experienced appraisers. This could be done by either the county or the State.

- Keep 2 percent cap on property tax. Cap assessments to a maximum 2 percent/year increase. Local run assessors for all property. Repeal HB 1815. Raise sales tax 2 percent. Raise income tax 2 percent. Audit all state funded programs twice a year. Mandate state authorized programs be adhered to or stiff penalties, e.g. casino money, etc. Exemptions for all seniors, not selected by income or house value. State mandate large counties be consolidated. State should bear the cost of welfare, not the county. Trending should have caps.
- Mitch Daniels has done these things wrong: privatized Indiana Toll Road, shut down Gary's BWV, lost jobs, outsourced contracts, taken steps to undermine township services by establishing the Commission on Local Government Reform which would eliminate services for the poor and indigent, reduce emission standards. We want a full service license branch, jobs and contracts, and township assistance for the poor.
- Limit property taxes to no more than one percent of the fair market value of the property. Assessed valuations must be fair and the appeal process must be fair. Assessed valuations must be grounded in reality. In those counties that have a high rate of unemployment and poverty, the county and state should take over the welfare functions of government. All tax sales and foreclosures that have occurred since 2002 should be nullified by a special act of legislature, right the wrongs which unfair taxation has committed. Make all industrial and manufacturing properties assessed by the state instead of local assessors. Stop taxing people out of their homes. Take care of senior citizens.
- Library users should not have to add to transportation costs by having to drive long distances to the nearest library. I oppose consolidation except in rare instances where one library isn't being used at all.
- I applaud the Governor's Property Tax proposal. It is perfect.
- We lived in our town for 30 yrs, using the county library branch. We are now retired and have lived in a new town for the past 10 years using the public library. We cannot believe anyone would prefer using the county system versus the public library. Leave our library alone! It is ours and should remain so! Property taxes in my county may be high, but the amount each property owner actually pays each year for our library is not very much – this in return for an excellent library. Trying to save any money by consolidating my library into The county library system will not provide residents any advantages - compared to what WE now have, what WE have paid for and what WE want to keep. Why should the residents of my town subsidize The county library system by consolidating? This is just another name for taking something away from residents – something that they have built and paid for - themselves. Our library is not broken. The county library system may be, but should not be allowed to swallow up my library using



the term consolidation. This is just an excuse to receive property tax dollars, to in effect provide additional funding to the county library system! Please leave our library alone!

- Please stop the consolidation of libraries! If you eliminate my library where will our children and the other young children get the wonderful experience they receive at the many free programs that our library currently offers? Because our library is only 5 miles from our home, we are able to attend many programs and to instill the love of books and reading in our two young children everyday. Please do not eliminate our library!
- County income tax is not the solution for my county. Do a statewide comparison of all the state, county, township and local boards, their salaries and benefits including those of the attorneys for each board. Consolidate and/or merge boards within their own cities, towns, counties, townships and state. Refuse to pay board of council members if they do not appear at meetings. Do a statewide comparison at all levels of government to see who gets health benefits and who does not. Do a statewide comparison at all levels of government to see who receive multiple salaries. End the practice and abuse of no-bid contracts. No-bid contracts that are awarded must be terminated. The officials who award them and the recipients must be fined. List on the web all the contracts within each government level that are awarded over (x dollar amount), name of the company, owner, dollar amount of contract and work required. List each elected office, board and/or commission. List the required qualifications, education, special skills, etc. required for each position. List what type of decisions the board and commission members will be making. List the salaries and benefits. List on the web all levels of government, all tax abatements, TIFs, and other such incentives to businesses and developers. List the dollar amount per year they will pay. List the dollar amount they will be saving by not paying. List the time length of tax incentive. List the new jobs that will be created, job descriptions, salaries and benefits and/or other benefits the government will be receiving in exchange including the hiring of local residents. Big business and industry pay a bigger, but fair share of property taxes. Farm Bureau's proposal of increasing the State income tax and sales tax and the other proposals should strongly be considered by our legislators and finally end this tax mess. Establish a flat property tax system. Create new tax revenue from increasing taxes on all guns, ammunitions, hunting weapons (bows, arrows, swords, etc.), all x-rated materials (videos, movies, games, books, magazines, dance, and strip clubs), all motorized water craft vehicles, a \$600/annual tax on not for profits, sales tax increment financing, large counties pay fair share of welfare, state pick-up balance in phases of 3-5 years, cities, towns, and the county to reduce the cost of government in phases and provide plan to state, all municipal and county taxing districts budgets to be put up on web. Hometown Matters could mean a county income tax or a local income tax, or new service fees, or increase of existing fees or taxes. This tax crises can be solved without a county or local income tax. It can be fixed at the state level in this session and not with Home rule so more families will not lose their homes, rental properties, or their small businesses. Consolidate or eliminate unnecessary government boards: Park Board with Marina or Port Authority; Water Board with Sanitation Board; Public Works with Economic Development Board; Redevelopment with Planning; Public Safety with Fire, EMT, Paramedics. Before we take on all day kindergarden, which is voluntary in the first place, how about addressing and fixing the pre-school problem first?
- As a frequent visitor to our local libraries, I am totally against this idea of cutting back funds to libraries. In this day and age when we are struggling to get young children to read books, I feel it would be a mistake to close any of our libraries.
- Consolidate county libraries to reduce our taxes.



- Eliminating Township Assessors in my county is the wrong move for fair assessments. First, as the legislators talk of eliminating township assessors, there must be a distinction between the township assessors and township trustee assessors. Township assessors are for townships with populations over 8,000. There are 1,008 townships in the state that vary considerably in both geographic area and population size. Across the 1,008 townships in the state, there currently are 177 township assessors and 831 township trustee-assessors. Many smaller jurisdictions with trustee-assessors already have turned over their assessing duties to the county and many have never done the assessing. We feel the legislators need to know the differences by area and this should be a home rule decision. In particular, my county has a large geographical area with 7 full-time township assessors. Of the 153,000 parcels in my county, 134,275 of these parcels are located within the jurisdictions of these full time township assessors. It is important to note that both county assessors and township assessors are involved in the property assessment function, but they do not perform the same duties and the work is not duplicated. County Assessor duties include: promote intra-county uniformity in assessment procedures; countywide equalization; selection and maintenance of a countywide computer system; certification of gross assessments to the county auditor; discovery of omitted property; shall perform the functions of an assessing official under IC 36-6-5-2 in a township with a township trustee-assessor if the township trustee-assessor fails to perform any assessing duty as required by statute or rule of the Department of Local Government Finance; responsible for the Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals. Township Assessors duties include: maintaining records of all real and personal property within a jurisdiction; conduct on-site review of properties to discover, list, and value any new construction; conduct audits of all self-assessments of personal and business tangible personal property; defend assessed values in the appeals process; maintain a sale disclosure database and verify all sales. There is a distinct difference comparing county-to-county. For example the state's smallest county by parcel and population with 3,365 parcels and population of 5,874 is smaller than one of my county's townships with a full-time township assessor with 5,437 parcels and a population of 10,288. There are many counties smaller than our townships in my county.
- House Bill 1478 does not cut taxes, it just shifts taxes. Option 1 is the freeze the increase in tax levy, Option 2 is for property tax relief, and Option 3 is a source to increase spending for public safety. I suggest the State removes their charges on property taxes. These consist of the State Fair Board, State Forestry, Welfare HCI, Welfare Medical Assist Boards, and Child Special Health Needs. The state should take over more of the criminal justice system's cost. The fairest way to apply any income tax is to levy a tax that is the same countywide. The property tax relief needs to be a combination of sales tax and income tax.
- Public libraries and schools are most critical to the success of my community and family. Township government is antiquated and a duplication of some services already available. Schools need funding, libraries have many unserved areas. I suggest consolidating township functions into county and township assessors into the county office. Please consider the costs of consolidation.
- These issues are critical: 1. The need to deplete the incentive for corrupt government, i.e. direct access to tremendous amounts of money to use for personal and private interests, and the ability to subjugate the public process and establish an authoritarian power. 2. The need of government to provide the public with access to the governmental process, made accountable for their actions, and create a transparent system (post all job descriptions and job openings online, list of all employees and salaries online, post



all department and city budgets online, post city code online, post all board minutes online, and post all requests for services and contracts online). 3. The need to engage in a legitimate comprehensive plan for the future of the City in determining its role in the regional, state and national economy, while replacing industry as the central stakeholder with the homeowner. 5. The need to rewrite and enforce a new zoning code. 6. With the help of the state, we need to radically restructure the local school district and make education the central institution of the community. 7. Need a very large private/government initiative to take responsibility for the tremendously degraded environment and become obsessive in cleaning, remediating, regulating discharges and planning for their sustaining reuse. 8. An ethics code, disallowing the hiring or contract work with family and friends. 9. The need to radically reduce crime and gang activities. 10. Eliminate patronage.

- By now you have probably got the word that thousands of people in my county are against the consolidation of the libraries. There are petitions and letters in the local newspapers stating all the good reasons: and here's another. " If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Sometimes saving money is not worth what you have to give up and if smart people can think of one solution to the money problems, they can think of another one . My library and its branches in are too important in their communities and if you don't think so, visit them and see for yourselves. Don't just sit behind a desk looking at figures on paper; take a hands on approach and do something positive. It's time to restudy your studies concerning the county libraries!
- I understand that the governor and the commissioners are looking to eliminate local government from small communities due to "too much government" in Indiana. Well, I wonder how you would feel if you lived in a small town and your local government was eliminated. No one to speak for you, no one to turn to when you need a helping hand, no one to understand what your community needs and to help get those things that are needed. Our local government can apply for grants that help benefit my town. They have a vested interest in this community and as long as we are allowed to keep our local government we will continue to have people who have our best interest in mind working for us. Please don't take local government away from the small communities. It would be like taking away their voices.
- Our Public library is the best thing that ever happened to the town. People do use it. I know because I lived there until this August. It's a key part of a living community, and consolidation of the library system would irreparably damage the town.
- Regarding the consolidation of public libraries and possibly the elimination of small and mid-size library systems... I was very concerned when I heard this as my family and I live in a small community in Northern Indiana. All the places we have lived, have had small or mid-size libraries. Finding the library in our new town, is as important to us as hooking up our phone service, opening a bank account and locating a family physician. If the library was only located in a bigger town further away, it would seriously affect the frequency and ability to support that library. Indiana is known for being a great state to raise a family in, and I believe that consolidation of smaller libraries would mar that great characteristic. Libraries bring a community together, and provide opportunities for people to have exposure to learning, reading and discovery they might never have if they need to coordinate transportation or the added travel time to a larger library further away. Please consider other avenues to reform and reduce costs to Indiana taxpayers. Indiana libraries only account for 3.33% of all property taxes collected in Indiana and as a homeowner I would gladly pay more on property taxes than lose my library. As a taxpayer and homeowner, please consider the personal implications this would have on



many Indiana families and children, and the limited effectiveness it would have in lowering property taxes.

- I believe my library responds to the needs of this community in a most effective manner. They have programs for all ages from toddlers through seniors. Because our territory covers a large area they have established 2 branches. I cannot see where consolidation could improve our library. The people have never complained about their tax. It has always been used for the best interest of the people. We "do not want our tax money" to be sent somewhere else to be squandered and misused. We are willing to support OUR LIBRARY AND ONLY OUR LIBRARY. We have very little debt left and we don't want to give our property to a central system.
- As a concerned taxpayer, frequent library user and former library board member of a small library, I am disturbed that you are discussing consolidating libraries under the Blue Ribbon Commission. Our library recently added an addition to our building as well as renovating the remainder. The Board has worked diligently to spend money wisely to benefit the public users of the library. I see no benefit to our local children and adults to have to travel to a larger library in the event our local library is closed. Many school children use our library daily for their school projects and having computers available to people who do not have them in their home is an added benefit. Many would not have the resources to travel to a larger library for their needs nor would children get to use the library, sometimes on a daily basis. Also taking smaller libraries out of towns would make a hardship on those who are handicapped and not able to travel. Further, requiring librarians to have a MLS degree as the "Certification Task Force" is suggesting, may keep smaller libraries from being able to pay the salaries these people would demand. As for electing as opposed to appointing library board members, please consider that the appointed people are caring, concerned and responsible with the taxpayers money and would be more beneficial than any politician who might not have a real interest in the library! Please consider NO consolidation, NO required MLS degree for librarians and NO elected library board!
- According to the blogs from the IndyStar, most Hoosiers are calling for abolishing the property tax, cut government spending on all levels, and stop outrageous school spending.
- I am writing today to express concern over a couple of areas charged to your commission. As a taxpayer, fiscal responsibility by government is a reasonable expectation. But, do not forget to figure quality of life and educational opportunities in your equation. Very few areas are considered metropolitan with quality transportation options, making consolidation of services difficult for quite a few Hoosier citizens. In our small community, if libraries are consolidated, many people who walk to these town libraries would be left with no opportunity for service if their doors were closed. From what I have heard from the library community (not just one librarian, but several) the majority of them do not favor consolidation. This is not because they fear for their jobs, but out of concern for their patrons. They feel that many people would be left underserved by this option. How would citizens who have no transportation, or other concerns be best served? If we are truly concerned about "brain drain" in our state, why are libraries and schools potentially on the chopping block. Libraries are the first link in the learning chain. Many people (myself included) have extremely fond memories of heading to their local library as pre-schoolers for storytime to kick-start their love of reading. A reading public is an informed public. Local libraries are a foundation of information and learning in their communities. The library directors all have the pulse of their community. By this, I mean that what circulates in one community may not be right for all. This isn't to say that I am in favor of any type of censorship, but that the directors



know their audience and use their resources wisely for their patrons and what their wants and needs are. If libraries and schools are consolidated, whose tax rate would be used? In my township, our rate is much lower than that of what would be considered the main branch of a countywide system. How does this benefit me if we would have to conform to their spending? I also know that this larger library is not well thought of as far as friendliness to patrons. I have experienced this doing genealogy research in their library. If you ask a question, they make you feel as if it is the greatest inconvenience of their day. Why not be able to frequent a library where the staff greets you by name, and knows that there is a new book about to be released that you might be interested in, instead of just being a number and a circulation statistic? Schools have been consolidated about as much as possible in our area. Why would schools want to become mega-centers of nameless students? Please remember that local centers of learning are important to their communities. Anything worth making a community a livable, thriving area comes at a cost. Yes, taxing bodies do need to keep an eye on their spending habits, as do all citizens. I, as a taxpayer, consider quality of life and educational options more important than the bottom line.

- Consider combining the County Sheriff and municipal police services similar to the way Indianapolis combined them into a metropolitan police department.
- In your charge "to provide recommendations for a leaner local government structure," it is my hope and plea that you will keep local libraries intact. My reasons follow: 1. One of the things that drew my husband and I from Maryland to our small town five years ago was its marvelous public library. I am a writer and rely heavily on our local library for interlibrary loan materials; I can walk two blocks to pick up volumes from all over the country on topics essential to my research. Should our library be consolidated or closed, I would have to travel every time I need resources. This would be costly to me in terms of time expended and gas used. 2. Our little library is the cultural heart-beat of our community, providing programs and services to all ages. Just before moving here, our little town lost its hardware store and its grocery store. Now our pharmacy has just gone out of business. Take our bustling library away from us, and we might as well turn the lights out on our town. 3. Our library gives our local children a head start in school. There is a steady stream of parents and children into the children's room with arms full of books. Past cooperative library programs in the county have shown that people do not drive for children's programs. Should we lose staffing in our children's department, or worse lose our library, I can't even begin to imagine the damaging effect the loss of literary resources would have on our local children and, thusly, our future. 4. Another part of our library that has heavy use is the computer area. Should that be lost, many local adults who can't afford computers would be shut out from Internet connections, which could carry economic consequences for these residents. The computers in the children's department are also used by many students, who can't afford computers at home, for school assignments. Taking this resource away from them would disadvantage them in school. 5. There is a steady stream of older adults in and out of the library for books, videos, and books on tape or CD. For the most part, they walk from their homes and would not be likely to drive. Their quality of life would be greatly diminished should our library lose its resources. 6. At 3.33% of all property taxes collected in Indiana, I'd say our local libraries are one of the best values we have going. To take away resources that provide channels of personal betterment for our citizens would, in my opinion, be extremely shortsighted.
- Eliminate all township government. Combine county offices clerk and recorder, and treasurer and auditor. Eliminate assessor, surveyor and coroner. Replace county commissioners with county executive and council. Eliminate secretary of state and combine state treasurer and auditor. Elect ALL local and state officials in even NON-



presidential years. Allow cities over 100,000 and counties to merge. Allow counties to merge. Merge school districts. Elect town and city governments in odd years. Local taxes approved by local representative bodies.

- I do not support the closure or consolidation of libraries. There is a terrific growth in population within the immediate area and the demand for the library services is also growing beyond the present need. A new high school was opened just five years ago and is currently undergoing a large building expansion to accommodate the large increase in the number of students. Just this past August a new middle school opened its doors to additional students whose families moved to the area also served by the library system. The increased numbers can be verified by the school district. The current facilities are not large enough to handle the number of members they currently have let alone any increased membership. Maybe other areas might not be affected as much as the Crown Point district so consideration should be made on an individual basis.
- I write in opposition to any proposed consolidation of public libraries which would include the elimination of small library systems such as my Public Library. No business would seek to distance itself from its customer base. In fact, the opposite is more often true as business enterprises seek to make themselves more accessible to their customers by establishing convenient branches. Why then should the State of Indiana seek to deprive its citizens of accessibility to the services provided by the many small library systems that exist throughout the rural areas of the state? One of the purposes of government is to provide services to the citizenry that they could not provide for themselves. It is the essence of government to pool the resources of the citizens to better serve the needs of the community. A second important principle is to have decisions made at the smallest unit of government possible so that the governmental body may more accurately reflect the needs of the citizens. A third purpose of government is to educate the citizenry. One way that is accomplished is through the public schools, but an equally important way to educate the citizenry and provide an on-going means of education is through community based public libraries such as the one that exists in my town. With no predicted end in sight for rising oil prices, it is imperative that citizens not be forced to spend their hard earned dollars on gas to travel miles distant from their homes to avail themselves of this important and needed service. A trite but true saying is that if something is not broken, do not fix it. The statistics prove that the public libraries in Indiana are not broken: Indiana ranks second in the nation of library visits per capita and audio materials per 1,000 population; Indiana ranks third in the nation in Video/DVD material per capita and collection expenditures per capita; Indiana ranks fourth in the nation in circulation per capita. It is crystal clear that the independent library systems in Indiana, employing the principle of subsidiarity and service to all citizens of the state are NOT broken. Do not support plans for consolidations which will destroy them!
- While local government consolidation is an admirable objective, I have been informed that consolidation of the libraries is one of the topics being discussed. Living in my County, and also in my Township, I would object to consolidating my town's library system with the county there. While there certainly would be synergies with the County, I have not found the same community feeling or range of excellent services that my town has. While approaching this matter on a statewide basis sounds good, I think each individual library system has to be studied carefully. Libraries provide so many essential services when managed efficiently but, like schools, need to be in neighborhood settings. While apparently there are constraints to opening our schools' computers and libraries on nights and weekends, libraries fill that gap for children, as well as adults. As we strive to provide our children with a better education (and therefore higher ISTEP scores), libraries can offer less regimented reading and computer skills to all. Those families that cannot purchase books or computers bring their children and themselves to



libraries frequently. While I can understand that those cities and towns which are unable to offer a wide range of services or have been mismanaged would be better off in a larger system, I do not feel that this always presents a savings as management staff grows and patronage from farther away shrinks. I ask that you evaluate those small library systems that work carefully as you look at a total picture of local government reform. Surely there are many duplications in government, but targeting libraries would be a mistake. Other less easy, possibly politically challenged, ways would serve a much better purpose.

- I am writing in regards to the Consolidation of Libraries. I do not feel this is a wise decision. I use my Public library a lot and would not be happy if I had to drive to visit the library. Another concern I see is children not having convenient access to a library. The literacy rate in this country is down considerably and now the government is wanting to take away the convenience of being able to read books. Do you really think parents are going to drive a considerable distance to take their children to the library? At least if a library was within walking distance, children could enjoy the library on their own if parents cannot drive them. My childhood experience with the library was wonderful. I can remember walking to the library and spending hours looking through all the books on the shelves. At the age of fourteen, I started my first job at a library. It was the best job I ever had and I have wonderful memories of that library job. Libraries are needed in every community! People need the opportunity to read books; books that they cannot afford to buy. In my opinion, more tax dollars could go to the libraries rather than be taken away!!
- We need to put our foot down now - we do not need to lose our local libraries - the small community libraries such as mine. Look at what consolidation with the school systems did - we lost a lot of the smaller communities to so called progress. The libraries are needed. They are a very IMPORTANT part of the town history, information etc. Put a stop to this elimination that has been going on since Mitch Daniels came into office. I am glad and proud to say that I did not vote for him and refused to vote - since we have to show picture ID etc to vote now (this was uncalled for since you already had to sign the ballot book and always did). Voting was a personal right. We are Americans. Our freedoms are slowly being taken away from us and we are allowing it to be done. STAND UP and stop this crazy idea of consolidating libraries.
- I wish to let you know that consolidating the libraries and causing us to lose my Public library is in bad taste. I use my library a lot. I do not have internet access at home so I come to the library to check my email and browse web sites. I also read a lot and I don't wish to have to go to another library in another town to check out books. If you consolidate the libraries, then I feel that literacy in Indiana will drop. The kids will not have any place locally to go to check out books. Please do not consolidate the libraries and eliminate our local libraries.
- Yes, I am concerned about rising property taxes, especially when I am getting close to retirement age and will be on a fixed income. Yes, we all need to think of ways to generate income and cut costs so that we can keep tax rates manageable within the state of Indiana. However, I am also concerned that the quality of life in my small town will be compromised if our local library has to close because of consolidation. The benefits of keeping all libraries open far outweigh the savings in the very small piece of the tax dollar pie that goes to fund public libraries. For example, with consolidation, would I, the elderly, local children, have to drive 20 minutes to visit a library? Or even further to where they have hired security guards because of "PROBLEMS" they are having? Our library and I'm sure many small libraries in Indiana are more than shelves with books, provide many services for all ages and are the keystone of a healthy



community. Bigger (consolidation) is not necessarily better, nor does it guarantee tax savings. It definitely will NOT improve the quality of life for the residents if our library is closed.

- In the small communities that make up our four county school corporation, the local libraries are the only resources some of our students have to do research, work on a computer outside the school day and to check out books for reports or for pleasure reading. Closing any of these facilities will make it much more difficult for families with limited resources to help their children get the information needed to succeed in school. I do hope that the Blue Ribbon Campaign will consider the consequences for everyone before closing these needed local facilities altogether. I understand the possible monetary savings that some form of consolidation could provide as far as staffing. However, closing any of these facilities will be a terrible hardship on our rural students.
- I am writing in regards to the library consolidation of my Public library and other libraries in my County. I do not believe that consolidating these libraries will be beneficial to the communities. I worked at a Branch Library for five years, and if you decide to consolidate I fear it will be the first to go. Taking that library away would be absolutely detrimental to the community, it is the hub for the entire town. Books as well as friendships are passed through this library. Please, please do not go through with consolidation! You will be stealing the very heart and soul of some communities! Thank you.
- In gathering a greater understanding of whether small town libraries merging in with large county libraries would generate a reduction of taxes and still be a beneficial move for the community, this letter is one constituent's point of view. Township and small town libraries create a unique relationship with their patrons. Some have been through a great deal together, like my public library. Their smaller size allows them the flexibility of responding to the creative and educational expressions desired by the patrons. They have learned how to be resilient and create peaceful resolutions. And if computer systems of neighboring libraries vary greatly it would take a large sum of money and a great length of time to switch over to one system. This would not save any money. Hopefully you will understand that these libraries are precious expressions of the uniqueness of that community. Some people in the library field have said that if Board members were elected by the community instead of being appointed perhaps this would create a more fiscally responsible situation in all libraries across Indiana. This is already being accomplished in other places. It's an idea. For each community to manage their own library in a financially responsible way by their own philosophy is perhaps why the staff in smaller libraries seem happy. The small town warmth and friendliness creates an enjoyable community center that draws the patrons in especially this patron, a non-residential patron. It is different with a large county system, as the county library has said before, they have a different philosophy than ours. They have other positive attributes. Yes, peaceful resolutions for less taxes that create harmony within the community are important, respectfulness to diversity is important. Sometimes lower numbers on paper sounds good until time reveals something else of perhaps more importance was lost. Several decades ago consolidating schools was the so thought brilliant idea. Currently, the statistics prove it created a worse environment for learning, and in the long run creates higher expenses for society.
- The children are our future, so many sides of this needs to be looked at in order to make wise decisions for the future generations.
- Leave the public libraries alone. Did whoever come up with this idea really think it through? I don't think so. Do you really think it will be a good thing? I don't believe that either. What is being proposed here is going to be devastating to our children. Did anyone even consider those who will not be able to travel to another library because of



lack of transportation or other reasons? Libraries have wonderful programs for children. This should be safeguarded. If the government needs to save money, then they need to rethink how they waste the money they are in control of. I'll never understand why our politicians, etc. can't live on their income they are now provided for by us, the citizens but expect us to make it on what we get in our take home pay. And then instead of, living a bit frugally like the real people out here, you pay yourselves more, take more from us and then turn around and take from our children. Again, I say, leave the libraries alone and let the communities keep their libraries. I pray you come to your senses before you make a bigger mess of things. God is watching, too, and He sees how you handle things. He sees how you handle money, and things like programs such as the libraries have for our children. I will pray for all of you.

- I urge you not to consolidate local libraries. I live in a small town. Our library is very important to me. I am an elementary educator, parent, and adult reader. I use our library regularly and know the importance it plays in our town's life. Our children need our library! Don't consolidate libraries!!!!
- I would just like to say I OPPOSE consolidation of county libraries. We have a very up-to-date library in our small town and it would change dramatically if it were operated out of the county seat instead of locally. The small town library is often a gathering place of people and ideas. It is used by young and old alike. Those that just want to read a good book and those that want to do research on the Internet. Our library staff have served faithfully for more than 30 years and know more about this library and community than those at the county seat will ever know. They CARE about our community too. Please do not go forward with the proposed consolidations. There must be another way to cut the budget.
- I write this letter to request that consideration not be given to consolidation of public libraries in Indiana, as requested by Gov. Mitch Daniels. Small town libraries are a lifeline to its patrons. No one wants to have to travel outside their own town to visit a library or take part in activities hosted by them. Especially in winter, and especially with gas prices as high as they are, families should not have to travel to libraries for books, movies, research resources or classes offered by libraries. Please do not take this cherished part of small town life away from its citizens.
- I live in a small town of about 4,800 people. I have spent 15 years living other places. I have always had a library card and, by far, my library is the best library for its size. I would never support any action that would endanger that. Going to the library to get books, movies, magazines, etc. has always been a part of my life and I am raising my son to make sure it is a part of his. Consolidating libraries or in anyway limited access to anyone (i.e. making it a longer drive) is just wrong there has to be a better way to save money. The library has always been a safe, calming environment that is open to everyone! That helps everyone in the community. People become better educated, learn second languages, have the opportunity to come together to discuss issues.
- Please keep my Library open. Our family moved here over a year ago and has found the library to be par excellence. Its fountain of resources, from educational and entertaining movies to books and audio supplies, continually impresses us. Despite its small size, it has a wide variety of materials of every kind readily available. Having a library conveniently located enables us and many others to use it on a daily or weekly basis. We sincerely request you keep this Public library in service so it can continue to provide us with books and other materials.
- I am against consolidation of local government, especially public schools and public libraries. Consolidation of schools and libraries does provide good service to the local people. Stop spending money on fancy building additions and new buildings. Slowly



over a period of 5-10 years phase out property tax and replace with income tax. If current income is not large enough, stop spending. This includes government at the State level, not just local level! I know there is a cap on the amount of money libraries can spend each year (3%). This same cap should be in all areas of government, both local and state.

- I disagree with the consolidation of the smaller libraries. I live in a rural community by choice and have grown up in rural communities. When I was a small child one of my favorite places to go was the small town library for both reading and safe activities. In a small community libraries is one of the only positive outlet for children under the driving age. Closing libraries would be contributing to the small town crime since the children wouldn't have any positive outlets for their time. I know several small town children who come to the library to play games, check out books, check out movies, or even for the activities. I also have the opportunities to go to other libraries, but choose to attend my town library due to the friendliest of the staff. Since the libraries share material going to a smaller library you can get the same material without the drive. I have a lot of friends with children who bring their children into the library to encourage a life-time of learning. Those same parents don't have the time normally to go to the bigger libraries which require a 20-30 min. drive.
- Consolidation of of the libraries in my county would be more wasteful than helpful. Consolidating even only the four main systems would be a technological nightmare. The software issues would need to be addressed in terms of what Operating System is used as well as the difficulties integrating the catalogs of each system in a manner searchable by all. There would need to be physical inventories done to determine the exact contents of each branch in each system. There would also be a homogenization of salaries across the systems, which could result in significant pay raises for people who would not otherwise be due them. This happened in places like Toronto and is under negotiation in the Minneapolis/Hennepin County consolidation underway now in Minnesota. There is also the question of the level of service each system extends to their patrons, because I'm not at all impressed by the Reference staff at the county central library.
- Letter from the Improvement Team who is a group of business leaders and citizens brought together to promote networking and communication among government agencies. If consolidation of libraries occurs, it would mean our library would become a branch of the county library system with only one member from our area likely to serve on its board. Services, programs, branches, and personnel would probably be cut. Taxes paid by our community residents would go to the county system with only a portion used to operate our library. Our town's Improvement Team believes that collaboration between libraries, not consolidation, is the best way we can serve our communities. Consolidation does not necessarily save money. The logistics of consolidating the seven district libraries would be enormous. Under consolidation, the building and expansion debts of independent library districts would have to be shouldered by taxpayers of the entire county. Some libraries in the county have unions. Salaries would have to be equalized throughout the county. The seven members of the public library board of trustees are unpaid volunteers who give of their time and talents to oversee a service area that covers the southern third of the county with a population of 17,835 residents. This board has been and continues to be fiscally responsible to the library and the Indiana Department of Government Finance. What would be the makeup of a new centralized board? How could small libraries be adequately represented at the county level? Will our library become a "cookie cutter" library? Who will decide what programs and services our library can offer? Who will decide the use of our meeting rooms? Last year, the library's meeting rooms were used 835 times. The library held 485 programs for senior, adult, young adult, and child participants. During 2006, meeting



room use by non-profit organizations such as girl scouts, boy scouts, 4-H, women's clubs, the Historical Association, and other local groups numbered 350. Will our small town libraries be closed? These libraries are flourishing and well visited. How will we serve the literacy needs of these low-income individuals in these areas? The Improvement Team fully supports the in its effort to prevent the consolidation of public libraries. The Improvement Team wants to keep the Public library "our home town library."

- While we understand the need to consolidate some local government agencies we would like to appeal to the commission to leave our local library as it is. This library serves our entire rural area and is very active in providing programs to the young children and to the older adults in our community. My husband and I are active in fundraising for the Friends of the Library. We use the library weekly and it was one of the things that attracted us to moving here 13 years ago. We would be willing to work to keep our library open.
- This letter is in regards to the consolidation of the Public Library. I am against the consolidation of the library into the county system. I have lived here the last 7 years and use the library here in town frequently. I enjoy the programs that are offered at the library and the classes. I do not feel that consolidating the library into the county system is going to benefit those here in town. We already fund the library with our tax dollars, which I am glad to do. Why should my tax dollars fund the county system, when we have a perfectly good library here in town? Plus the residents here in town helped build this library. Why should we risk losing some of the services that the library provides, in order to save a few dollars. Please leave our library alone, there is nothing wrong with how it is run and consolidation isn't going to benefit us here.
- Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion on whether libraries should be consolidated. As the Director of a local library I have many concerns regarding this issue. It has never been proven to my knowledge that consolidating libraries saves money. The logistics of consolidating the seven (7) district libraries in our county would be enormous. What is the value if you lose services, programs and branches in the process? In our district we have a main branch and two small libraries in outlying areas. The communities in our outlying areas are poor and would find it very difficult if not impossible to travel to our main library for services or programs. This would more than likely leave them totally without services in their area. Libraries are the heart of almost all communities. It is where the young come to learn about books and programs all the way to our seniors and beyond to when someone passes away and their family may come in looking for some quotes for their loved ones funeral. It serves every age group within a community. It is a safe place of children as well. We want to keep this kind of library in our own home town. We want local control of how it is run. Under consolidation, the building and expansion debts of independent library districts would have to be shouldered by tax payers of the entire county. Some libraries in the county have unions. Salaries would have to be equalized throughout the county. The seven (7) members of the Library Board of Trustees are unpaid volunteers who give of their time and talents to oversee a service area that covers the southern third of the county with a population of almost 18,000 residents. They have been and continue to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. How would a newly formed centralized board be selected? I feel the library board should be appointed not elected. Politics seem to play a large role in the decisions that are made by elected boards. We wish to serve our community based on the needs of our community not on the needs of a county wide system. Bigger is not always better. Our citizens are shocked, dismayed and very worried that their beloved library may cease to exist as they know it. I appreciate being able to voice my concerns before the Commission makes their recommendation to Governor Daniels. It is my hope and the



hope of our community that as you review all the data received, you will realize the people of Indiana do not support consolidation of libraries. I have heard someone say that libraries are sacred. I believe they are. We hope you will listen to your conscience and review the facts when you consider your recommendations.

- I am a trustee at a local library district with one main library and two branches. I write in opposition to the consolidation of libraries. I am not writing to protect my position. I gladly serve without compensation, though I would regret the lost opportunity for public service. I write because state mandated consolidation of libraries is bad public policy. Good policy balances cost with service. And, good public policy leaves it to the local citizens to establish the levels of services delivered locally. In my two terms as a trustee, I have not heard one request for consolidation. Nor have I heard a single person come to budget hearings or public meetings with complaints about wasting money, the cost of annual budgets, or tax levies. I have heard three distinct arguments for consolidating local governments (townships, libraries, public safety functions, etc.). The first reason is to eliminate corruption. Eliminating corruption is a worthy endeavor. However, corruption can only breed in institutions with power. Our library board is appointed, not elected. We do not accrue obligations for appointment- no “favors” promised for election. As a library board, our scope is narrow and focused: provide educational, reference, and recreational programs for our residents. The vast majority of these programs are operated by in-house staff. The second argument for consolidation is cost reduction; in this instance assumed to be generated by economy of scale. However, many library districts already participate in cooperative agreements that produce the same net outcome as consolidation. Health insurance coverage, interlibrary loans, and cooperative purchasing are just some of the tools already open to districts to facilitate economies of scale. What has not been quantified in this discussion is the cost of consolidation. Aside from the administrative costs such as reprogramming computers, signage, bank accounts, etc., several legal issues present themselves. Some library districts carry a high debt load, others very little. How is the debt to be equitably distributed? Many libraries have established endowments with donors believing they are contributing to a specific library, not a library outside their district. Risk management becomes an issue: generally speaking, smaller units mean lower risk exposure because there is more direct control and fewer opportunities for accidents. With risk comes legal action- do I as a taxpayer assume a financial liability for any outstanding legal action (employment law, personal injury, etc.) for a library twenty miles away- liability I do not have now? I am certainly exposed to payment for any future occurrences in distant libraries. The third and final argument I have heard for consolidation is the elimination of multiple layers of government. I can only speak to library districts. In that particular case, there are no “multiple layers.” In the case of libraries, county libraries do not overlap other districts. A taxpayer pays taxes to either one district or none. That single district is under local control- all trustees (not one or two) are residents of their community. Under consolidation, our taxpayers lose local control of their institution and assume the financial obligations of other districts. Our district services one-third of our county, yet we receive only 3.3% of the total amount levied for libraries in the county. The remaining two-thirds of the county receives 96.7% of the library tax dollars. This fact is not presented in the form of a complaint, but is brought forward to demonstrate the unequal re-distribution of financial resources and obligations that will result from consolidation. Each library district has a set tax levy, capital debt, loans, warrants, etc. Under consolidation, taxpayers in our district, which proportionately uses very few tax dollars for the service area, will see their tax dollars budgeted to other parts of the county. And, as we have one of the lowest library tax rates in the county, we will almost assuredly see our tax rate rise. As local control is lost, our residents will be powerless to stop the flow.



In summary, I do not believe the consolidation of libraries accomplishes the objectives of the government reform initiative. Corruption has little opportunity in small, local library districts, economies of scale can be accomplished without consolidation, and eliminating multiple layers of government is a moot point- there are no multiple layers. Eliminate the rhetoric and examine the facts- the only way consolidation of local libraries will reduce costs is to reduce services. Our two branch libraries will close, hours could be reduced at our main library, and the number and quality of programs will be reduced. Residents will have to travel to other communities to receive the level of service we currently provide. Everything I have heard from our patrons is specifically contrary to the proposed course of action: services are to be maintained or expanded, not reduced.

- We don't like the idea of consolidating our libraries. We have a wonderful new library in our little town of Remington and we would NOT like to see it changed or consolidated with another community. It would be very unpopular to do away with it and make our citizens travel a farther distance to use it. We think this is a BAD idea on Mitch Daniels part.
- First of all, I would like for you to know that you have my gratitude and admiration because your job must not be easy. As a taxpayer, like everyone else, we don't want to pay more than is absolutely necessary. None of us do. But, please consider the following when making decisions regarding our local libraries. To consolidate schools, we still transport kids to school - children must attend school - it's the law. So we go pick them up and make sure they are there on time. To consolidate police/fire, we still provide service that comes directly to our homes. Coverage is still provided. To consolidate the BMV, this is a service that the normal person uses only two or MAYBE three times a year. So consolidation there doesn't really affect the individual lifestyles tremendously. To consolidate libraries, an institution whose main focus is on education, literacy, and in many communities, the only, solid foundation that they still have. If we consolidate libraries, where will our children go after school, when you take away the after school programs that libraries have to offer local children? Children in elementary school who cannot drive, children whose parents work until 5 or 6pm so that those kids have no where else to go. Children who cannot afford to have computers to learn hand-eye coordination at an early age or who do not have educational games to help them to learn. Children who are not able to have a set of encyclopedias or Internet access in their homes, but still need to have a report completed. Do you know that children of all ages go to libraries to study together because it is a safe place, because sometimes they are not welcome at home, because they have no where else to turn? Not all parents help their children with homework, reports, or any assistance they need to grow and learn. But at the local library those children can find assistance either with others as a study group or from the librarians. What about the reading programs offered to children? Consider if we remove those what children will think. We must consider the elderly also. Many do not have transportation and must walk to wherever they want to go. Local libraries are close to them and when they have nothing else to do, they can go to the library and get a book. The elderly sometimes are on limited income and cannot afford newspapers, movies, books, etc. but they can go to local libraries and get all of these things at no charge. Libraries also offer programming for the elderly. Programs that help them socialize, do crafts and other recreations, learn thru speakers and other media, and even to give of themselves, allowing them the feeling of self worth at times when they can not find it anywhere else, as a volunteer. Think of the teens and their mentoring programs at libraries. Think of the teen night programs that local libraries offer to help teens stay off the street while being involved in programs to enhance their literacy, socialization skills, or just have fun. Consider new mothers who stay home with their children and are on limited income, who have babies or toddlers. Those mothers



deserve a chance to take their children to the local library every day if they like. Those mothers deserve a chance to get books and tapes from the local library often to read and to their children and as their children grow to read together. In our busy world, do you think that a parent will take the extra time to drive several miles to a library to get what any child of any age what they need as often as that child needs it? Probably not. And what if there are several children in the household? Do you think that the parents will drop what they are doing at the last minute on Tuesday night (because kids always wait till the last minute to do that report) to go 20 miles to the library to help their child get what they need? Or even take them there so the child can get what they need? Gas prices are high, many cannot afford doing that. Time is short for many parents, with busy schedules. There are homeschoolers too that need access to all things libraries have to offer. Just consider these things. Libraries offer computer classes for those who do not have the means. They offer copiers, computers, FAX, interlibrary loans, access to microfilms, genealogy, news media, educational programming, etc. The list goes on and on. So my challenge to you is to consider very carefully when decision time comes to remove local libraries from small communities just what the consequences may be. After all OUR libraries are stable, solid foundations for our communities in America. No one is going to bring books, computers, librarians to our doors as a service like fire service. People use libraries on a daily basis. Many people do not have transportation to libraries other than their own feet. Children can walk to libraries after school to get what they need, books or info for reports, computer access, assistance from library personnel. Consolidation is one thing but to completely remove the small libraries from the small communities is a mistake.

- I am writing this letter in the hopes that it will be joined by many more voices in my community and help stop consolidation of our local library. I would first like to begin by making a brief introduction to me and why this issue concerns me. One of the reasons we chose our new “hometown” was because of the many programs offered by the local library. You see, going from two incomes to one; we knew our funding for “extracurricular programs” was going to be limited. The library offers so many “education-rich” programs for no charge to my children. When I heard of the possibility of having the libraries consolidated, and possibly losing program funding and/or the library itself, I felt like I had to voice my concerns. My hope is that this commission will find other areas which could go a little leaner, while not affecting our children’s futures. You see, I think that the future lies in the hands of our children and we need to let them know that their future does matter to us. And, we are given the great responsibility of offering them any and all resources to help them be successful in their futures.
- It will not be in the best interest of the town to close the Library there is a lot of children and adults who benefit from it. If it is moved there won’t be anywhere they can get further education as there will be no transportation for them.
- I enthusiastically support consolidation of all sorts. Also, I beg of you, if you do anything at all, I pray that you work to eliminate Townships. 1. Consolidation in general should be encouraged. There are too many governments in Indiana. Consolidation of even counties should be on the table. California is approximately five times the land mass of Indiana and has five times as many people. California has 67 counties while Indiana has 92. The rationale most commonly given in support of consolidation is a. Money will be saved by the “economies of scale.” “Economies of scale” refers to the concept that when services are performed in mass quantities, the average per unit price is reduced because the overhead costs are distributed. More rationales for consolidation are: b. There should be unitary leadership. Without unitary leadership there is chaos. A multitude of leaders will have a multitude of opposing plans; goals will be difficult to achieve; money will be wasted because of missing coordination. c. There should be



clear accountability. If there are a multitude of leaders, then whose fault is it if the government doesn't work? What point would it make to vote in new leaders if the new leaders do not have the complete power to fix the situation? One person should be able to say "The buck stops here." d. We live in metropolitan economic communities. While we think of ourselves as members of the community as a whole, we are separated by arbitrary zig-zag lines on the map. Fallback position: It may not be politically feasible to do consolidations. In that circumstance, the Commission should work for multi-city and multi-county districts. Examples are multi-city and multi-county fire, police, sanitary, transportation, and water districts. 2. Township government should be abolished immediately. Townships were obsolete 100 years ago. They are inefficient and corruption prone. Township offices are not covered by the local media; few voters pay attention to township offices because they appear at the end of the ballot; and townships tend to be dominated by one party or the other because of demographic trends. Townships impose an unnecessary layer of local government. Our "local government" should be the city in urban areas and the county in rural areas. The duties of the township government could be easily transferred to the county government. An example would be that a Township Trustee's powers could be easily assumed by a County Commissioner. According to Wikipedia, approximately 20 states have a form of "township." In some states, like Nevada, a "township" is simply a space on a map. In most of the other 20 states, "township government" is akin to a watered down municipal government. Commentator Brian Howey reports that 5 states allow townships to do property assessments. No other state is entirely like Indiana. Indiana is unique in that "township government" is permanent and statewide. Since townships are permanent, then townships will occupy the same space as cities. A major problem in Indiana is, therefore, that the township government has become a rival government to the city government. The original intent for township government in the other states was to provide low budget services for rural areas. In other states, as cities expand, the townships melt away and can eventually cease to exist. Please examine Ohio as a model for reference. Fallback position: It may not be politically feasible to abolish townships. In that circumstance, townships should be converted into watered down municipalities, as exist in the Ohio model. Cities and townships should not be allowed to coexist and the townships should melt away as cities annex portions of their territories. 3. Counties: Presently we have one consolidated city-county government and then we have a modified Executive-Legislative pattern in all the other counties. There are three County Commissioners who act as one Executive. Selected county offices are elected to act independently from the Commissioners and Council. Presently, County Councils are not as involved in governing as much as they should be. As suggested by Brian Howey, county governments should be slightly reorganized into a true One Executive-Legislative model. Other county offices should be chosen as "cabinet" officers. A variation on the idea might have independently elected prosecutors and controllers while all other county offices are appointed. Further options: a. Give County Executives and Councils the power to reorganize their county government as they see fit. b. Convert Fort Wayne and Evansville into city-county governments like Indianapolis. c. Have classes of counties just like we have classes of cities. Suggested classes: (1). Counties with consolidated city-county governments (2). Counties with more than one major city (examples: Lake and St. Joseph counties) (3). Remaining counties with high population densities (4). Remaining counties with low population densities Controversial proposals: d. Require persons who live in unincorporated areas to pay entirely for the county services that they receive. Don't require persons who reside inside cities and towns to pay for county services received solely by persons in unincorporated areas. (Example: sheriff patrols in unincorporated areas) e. Have some counties consolidated into multi-county



metropolitan governments. (examples: New York City and Toronto) 4. School systems While I support consolidation, consolidation would solve only a small portion of the problem with schools. The biggest problem with our school systems is that the school boards do not act as if they are accountable for their actions. The school boards seem to react to pressure from parents and teachers to spend more money on services, but they do not seem to react to pressure from taxpayers to lower expenditures and eliminate waste. Since the school board elections are nonpartisan, voters are not aware of what they are voting for. I cannot think of a perfect solution, but I will offer ideas that might help: a. Move school board elections to November. b. Elect school board members to two year terms. The terms would begin shortly after the election. c. Require the school board members to run under a party label, then the school board members would be subject to party discipline. d. Require referenda on major school board decisions. e. Require city, county, or state approval on major school board decisions. f. Have methods of school funding other than local property taxes 5. Elections and Office structure a. Move County Executive, County Council, school board, and any township offices not abolished into the same election cycle as the municipal elections. In that way we could have true local elections without the distraction of state or national issues. b. Eliminate or greatly reduce at-large districts in local elections. In that way voters would have neighborhood representatives that they could identify with. Further option: Allow different numbers of County Councilors in different classes of counties. 6. Indiana Constitution The Indiana Constitution says very little about local government. Therefore 90% of reforms should not require Constitutional amendment. The Indiana Constitution does make indirect mention of some county offices. It also makes indirect mention of the creation of new counties. Therefore amendments might arguably be required if the reform involves total abolition of specified county offices or if the reform involves the re-drawing of county lines. 7. Ideas for Future Reforms in State Government a. Coroner's Office. The office of county coroner should be abolished and replaced by a statewide medical examiner system with regional offices. The medical examiners would be appointed based upon merit. b. Governor's Office. All current statewide elected offices should become appointed offices and placed inside the governor's cabinet. c. Gerrymandering. Eliminate gerrymandering by having districts drawn by bipartisan or nonpartisan committees. d. Judicial System Reorganize the courts of each county such that the courts are uniform statewide.

- Indiana is definitely a heartland state. What makes it special is the local people being involved in and supporting each other. Promoting the local control and sense of the individual small community as an important value for the heart of America is paramount. I am in support of the library and community schools. Our family uses the Public Library. Our family is supportive of the Community School Corporation. Definitely the team effort of the library, park, and school to give excellent services to our students and community members in an affordable manner has contributed to the success of our family and our sense of community. Our public library streamlined by having relationships with other public libraries to transfer books and materials. Our school shares special education and career education services with other districts so that the expense stays at a minimum for our area. We should encourage local government officials to coordinate their services within disciplines such as library to library but also cross disciplines such as trustee to librarian. Local control means that local people have direct impact on the structure and financial goals of how programs are distributed. Local people have the ability to take pride in their community and its goals. Recommendations for reform: 1. Coordination of local officials to discuss financial structures and how they impact each other so that they can as a team make changes that may help promote the best services for the most appropriate amount of finances. 2. Bring local citizens and officials together



to set goals with measurable outcomes and dates to promote growth of more modern and relevant services. 3. Provide citizens with information about the structure and direction for the local government so that taxpayers may be motivated to support efforts financially and with volunteerism.

- Please don't close the library in my town. Surely you can save money elsewhere and not with education suffering. Thought you were interested in education. Not so if you even think of closing a library. If you could see the children entering with the parents, you wouldn't consider such a monstrous plan.
- Please do not consolidate libraries.
- I am opposed to the consolidation of our library because I believe a merger with the county library would harm the library and likely result in the closing of the our Adult Learning Center.
- We are very concerned about the proposed consolidation of Indiana libraries and believe that such a policy would cause great harm to our library and result in a marked decrease in the quality of life of our community.
- I am opposed to the consolidation of libraries. Through reciprocity agreements we have access to the extensive resources of any Indiana library. Consolidation will not expand our resources.
- We are against library consolidation. Unless some libraries are closed we do not see a great amount of money being saved. Library tax levies have been frozen since 1973 so we do not see how the levies raised could be as great as many other entities.
- We need the our library. Please do not consolidate or eliminate.
- Arguments against consolidation heard by the public library administration include: little or no savings could be realized through consolidation, the costs to consolidate and convert disparate automated library systems could be very high, consolidation of library boards would greatly reduce the number of citizens who provide oversight and accountability to libraries, and many of our users are simply very satisfied with libraries as they are and do not begrudge libraries the small portion of property taxes they collect.
- We definitely need reform in local government. The good ole boy system has gone on as long as property tax payers can stand. We definitely don't need townships and doing double jobs. It is expensive and can no longer be tolerated. Being disabled makes a hardship on paying my taxes and I believe I'll have to sell and move to another state if things aren't acted on soon.
- I can't believe you are all so stupid that you can't figure this out. That pile of garbage over in Merrillville won't even let me use my county library card anymore because I'm not in their library system anymore. They said I had to resubmit another application and pay \$20, which I will never do. Furthermore, if this board has any character at all, they'll call the county assessor and tell him that he doesn't get to decide who gets to see what and when! Also, you'd tell him to get in gear and complete his website rather than try to make it so less people can access it! Finally, if you were really smart you'd make all these 92 slob put up a web page that I can use.
- I can honestly say that our library is the heart of our town. At every stage of our children's development, from when they were babies through their teen years, our library had age appropriate programs that captured their interests and offered them wonderful educational opportunities. Now that our children are away at college my husband and I continue to take advantage of all the adult programming as well as the History Museum which the library funds. I am certain that none of these programs would be available to us in our town if our library consolidates with the county library. It would truly be a sad day for our town if we lose our township library. Please consider the consequences to our town if we were to consolidate township government with county government. The



amount of money we spend in taxes on our library is so small and what we would lose is so big.

- Our community has been informed of plans to consolidate our local library with the county library in order to reduce expenses for the state. While I understand and appreciate the need for efficiency and cost-cutting measures, my understanding is that the financial gain of this consolidation would be relatively small, particularly compared to the negative effects in our community. To lose our library building and local board would be a great loss; the next closest library of any size is at least half an hour away in any direction. This would seriously limit children's reading programs, student work, and computer and internet availability for local patrons, in addition to creating obvious convenience and availability issues. As a person with limited physical abilities, I depend on our local library for my work as a writer. Because I am unable to be out for long periods, regular travel to the county library for materials would be virtually impossible. There are many people in our community for whom, for various reasons, losing our local building would effectively be a sentence to no library at all. We are proud of our library, our dedicated library staff, our beautiful building, and especially the continued growth of informational resources here. In the interest of our community, our children's needs, and my own personal and professional concerns, I respectfully request reconsideration of the mandatory consolidation of our Township Library.
- Please do not recommend consolidating independent libraries in Indiana. These serve our state's smaller communities very well, often are the only source of continuing education for local residents, and are not responsible for the current increase in Indiana property taxes.
- It is not in the best interest of the residents served by the 238 independent library systems in the state to be consolidated. Please do not recommend this action. Libraries in these Indiana towns, cities, townships, and counties were established by local residents and serve their communities well, often as the only source of continuing education.
- I am concerned about the issue of library consolidation as a way of saving taxpayer's money. I volunteer to sit on our local library board, and we are very concerned about the negative consequences that could transpire if we were to be forced into merging with our county library. The township library underwent a major addition/remodeling which was completed in 2001. This project, which was funded 1/2 with a grant and 1/2 with local tax dollars, has created a library that the town is quite proud of and which receives many compliments from out-of-town visitors. We would hate to lose control of how we now operate this facility. We have seen first-hand what can happen in a community when it loses its local decision-making ability. Many residents of surrounding communities use our library as their own for various reasons. I can understand that larger libraries would probably be in favor of consolidation - they could gain the tax dollars from the local community being forced into merger and then the cost-cutting and service decline at the smaller "branch library" could begin. I hope the people making the final decision take a very hard look at just how little, if any, tax dollars really could be saved by consolidating libraries. We have read that one way this consolidation issue could be "forced" upon us is by requiring a librarian to have a master's degree, thereby commanding a salary that puts serious constraints on our budget. I think the position of Library Director should be filled by someone we feel is qualified to do the job, not by whether or not they have a certain degree. Our community has been very well served by our library director and staff. Thanks in advance for taking the time to do all you can to help us maintain a vital part of the heritage of our community.



- This message is in reference to the state government reform that is being move forward by our governor, concerning the consolidation of small sized library systems. The thing that really puzzles me is when ever conservative politicians speak of governing, they invariably speak with derision about adding another layer of mindless and expensive bureaucracy to an already overburdened system. With this plan, virtually every library system in the state would be impacted and much of their services to the public would be curtailed and it would be replaced by dilatants in some distant place. These small library systems, offer services and benefits to their communities that can not be quantified in dollar values. Their governing boards and much of their operating personnel are staffed by enthusiastic volunteers from their communities. The money saved by their efforts is significant and everyone benefits. This is democracy at its best. Local concerned people doing the most good for the most people. We've seen what the consolidation of federal law enforcement entities under the Office of Homeland Security has done for homeland security. By any rational review of its operation, it is nothing less than scandalous let alone the tax payers dollars that have been squandered. The operation of a library is very diverse and, it's true, much of the information that a person needs can be located on-line, however, a person has to be quite savvy to negotiate his or her way through the myriad of sites. Along with that, there are so many distractions that are more tempting than doing the work at hand, and valuable time is wasted. When a person, like yourself, has the services of a professional librarian aiding in the locating of specific material, the experience is rewarding, especially for children. Looking at most any survey, dollar for dollar, the best investment a community can make is in education and libraries, no matter how modest, are an interracial parts of our education system. Before enacting legislation to consolidate our local libraries, consider this saying, "There's nothing more expensive than a bargain." Consolidating our libraries will not be a bargain, and it will prove to be very expensive.
- I am stressing my concern of the consolidation of the local libraries. I am a resident and business owner and this consolidation would truly harm our area. My office is located directly to the north of the Library and the library is constantly in use. I have personally used it for business gatherings, research, community activities, etc. It is right now what I consider the hub of the community. I have lived here my entire life and we have lost so much due to miss-management, please do not let be another jab to our local area. We are wanting folks to stay here, move here, shop here, dine here, and open businesses. Getting rid of the library will be one more reason for our folks to leave the area. Please listen to my plea along with the pleas of many!
- Please retain my local library. Cut the staff if you must. But please retain those with the smiling faces who are helpful. This Library is a newer structure with a beautiful children's room. If it were vacuumed more often and not treated as a staff mealroom, it may be more welcoming. The library seems to serve as a baby sitting service for children after school. This is important for keeping children on there school work instead of on the street. This is the closest thing we have to a community center in my town. I don't know of any park district houses, at least that are available on weekends. We need a community center here.
- As a lifelong resident of my county, I am very concerned there is discussion of consolidating libraries. Indiana's rating of library services is among the best in the country. If a library wants to become part of another system, they are permitted to petition to another library system and both boards have to approve. This is a system which has worked well and all parties are in agreement. Forcing consolidation presents many problems--acceptance by the communities involved, converting online systems, shuttering facilities, and reducing hours. It is obvious Indiana has a problem in its tax



structure, and we need to work on a solution. Actually, the Governor's plan to appoint one assessor for each of the 92 counties is a good starting point and makes sense. Measures should be explored carefully and wide-sweeping changes should not be made hastily or for expediency in a political election year.

- I would like to ask that as you consider sweeping reforms in the arena of local government that you would refrain from the idea of consolidation of our local library districts. Our local library offers many services and resources that would be curtailed, at the very least, should we be forced into consolidation with the county library system. Libraries consume a mere 3.33% of property taxes and do not pose either a financial threat or promise a tremendous financial gain in the property tax arena. We value our local control of our library and dearly prize our current library system as it stands. Please realize that our library is a vital center of our community. We plead with you to direct your efforts to other areas.
- Please do not consolidate our local library with the county system. Our library offers services and resources and hours that are not matched by the county. We value our local control. Please do not take our local library away in an attempt to appease property tax opponents. Libraries take a mere 3.33% of property taxes. And consolidation would cost millions of dollars to merge computer systems that are currently being used. Please direct your efforts to more profitable areas of reform.
- I've never lived in the state of Indiana and now I'm glad. Any state that would reduce libraries and consolidate schools, thus driving up the student to teacher ratio in the name of creating a leaner government is not a place I would want to live or raise children. Lean means less fat not less meat. I can't imagine how dumbing down the population could be in any citizen's best interest.
- My city's public library is not in favor of library consolidation. We have collected many signatures of taxpayers and voters who are registering their opposition to changing the library system by consolidation. We wish to keep local control of our library's system organized over 100 years ago as my city was being created. We will see that you hear further from us through petitions of taxpayers and personal visit.
- I want to add my voice to the growing number of Indiana residents and tax-payers who are against any fundamental reform of Indiana's present funding system which finances the public libraries within our state. Radical changes for the funding structure or the forced combining of library districts is not necessary. There are plenty of other options for combining state-wide cost sharing expenses that local government entities have in common, like expenses for different types of liability and medical insurances and shared web-site costs as well as book and other material purchasing. A "watch-dog" system is already in place to curb any excessive construction and operating fund budgets for public libraries--which is more than can be said for other government entities. Instead of considering the consolidation of library districts, why don't you recommend that the same budget restrictions public libraries operate under be applied to all other government activities that rely upon property tax funds. Leave our libraries alone!
- I sincerely hope that libraries will not be consolidated. A local library is important to the identity of a small community. Libraries provide services for people throughout their lives. There are storytime programs for young children and delivery services for the elderly. Please leave our libraries the way they are.
- Please stop plan to consolidate our local library with others. How can you fix something that is not broken?
- We are very concerned to hear about the possible consolidation of our library. It would have a big negative impact on our lives if it were changed.



- Please do not make it mandatory for our libraries to merge if they do not wish to do so. I see no benefit in this change.
- We trust that as you deliberate and discuss plans and recommendations to reform and restructure local government, you will realize the importance and necessity of maintaining the small town community Public libraries and the value they offer to the citizens.
- If you consolidate the smaller and medium sized libraries, you will do away with all of the extras that bring people in. Consolidating takes away all the personal touches that make us feel special. In today's society, all the personal touches are being done away with one by one. No one pumps your gas or cleans your windows anymore. No one carries your groceries out to your car. No one even knows your name at the bank. Isn't it nice to have a few places left in society where you can't buy your bread and your tires at the same place? Please don't consolidate our libraries.
- It is indeed our fervent plea that the portion of the Commission on Local Government Reform charge be given every consideration regarding small libraries and my public library is allowed to continue giving library service to this area.
- If we want to encourage kids to read more it doesn't make sense to close down libraries. Parents that work 2 and 3 jobs to make ends meet can't afford to drive their kids 30 or more miles to a consolidated library. Count my vote as a resounding NO on this idea.
- Please do not consolidate my public library.
- I am writing to appeal that the independent libraries be left to operate independently. Access to local libraries is crucial. Local libraries, locally administered, locally governed have made the community stronger and better informed.
- As a taxpayer, former employee, volunteer, and patron of the library system, I ask you to please report that this library system is providing unique services that deserve to be continued as is, without consolidation.
- Our team believes that more collaboration between libraries, not consolidation, is the best way we can serve our communities. The logistics of consolidating the seven district libraries would be enormous. The building and expansion debts of independent library districts would have to be shouldered by taxpayers of the entire county. Some libraries in our county have unions. Salaries would have to be equalized throughout the county. What would be the makeup of a new centralized board? How could small libraries be adequately represented at the county level? How will we serve the literacy needs of these low income individuals in the small areas?
- Oppose library consolidation.
- I am most certainly against consolidation of our libraries. Please reconsider this agenda.
- Consolidation of libraries would be detrimental to rural and small community residents for the following reasons: 1) it would make library services out of reach for many, i.e., children and adults with no transportation except walking or biking, those whose employment does not allow time for driving to a distant library during hours when the library is open, those whose income does not allow for extra gasoline expense, those who do not otherwise go to the "city" where the consolidated library would be located. 2) it would counteract the emphasis on reading. 3) It would require more driving at the very time when it is necessary to eliminate as much pollution as possible. We both enjoy reading but would not spend the time and money or emit all the resultant pollutants to drive twenty or thirty miles round trip to a county library.