



## STATEMENT ON THE CAMDEN CITY LIBRARY

The residents of Camden City, NJ need their libraries especially in these difficult economic times. Libraries provide vital services including assistance with job searches and employment opportunities; literacy programs for children and adults; and computer training classes.

The New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) is committed to ensuring that strong library service continues to the residents of Camden City.

NJLA was extremely pleased to see so many governmental and community partners participating in the recent news conference pledging their support to continue library services to the residents of Camden City. We, too, offer our support to finding strong options for providing library services.

Patricia Tumulty, New Jersey Library Association Executive Director, attended the press conference and spoke with Mayor Dana Redd and Freeholder Director Lou Cappelli on the library funding situation in Camden City and offered to work with them. We believe the expertise of NJLA can be extremely beneficial in this situation.

NJLA has no objection to joining the Camden City Library with the Camden County Library System. This could certainly be a viable solution. We are, however, concerned that the correct process be followed to merge these two library systems. In New Jersey, citizens vote to establish a library. Therefore, any changes to the structure or charter of a free municipal library's status must only be authorized by a rescinding public referendum. Since the Camden City Public Library was established by referendum it must be dissolved by the same process. This has been done previously in New Jersey, for example, when the residents of Lakewood voted to dissolve their municipal library and joined the Ocean County Library system.

The goal of the New Jersey Library Association is to work with governmental and library leaders in Camden City and Camden County to devise a plan for library services to the residents of Camden within the framework of library legislation.

We look forward to beginning this work as quickly as possible.

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For more information contact Patricia A. Tumulty, NJLA Executive Director, at 609-394-8032.

