



February 23, 2017

## **SB 902 Talking Points: FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

**This document will help TLA members prepare for meetings and conversations with legislators, local officials, and other external organizations regarding the negative impact SB 902 would have on public libraries. It can be shared with staff, and other stakeholders, but is not meant for public distribution. Please use the SB 902 Fact Sheet as a hand-out in any meetings.**

**SB 902 by Birdwell:** Relating to a prohibition on the adoption of certain library standards by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)

### **Key Points - Accreditation**

- Public library accreditation standards ensure the efficient and accountable use of state and federal resources
- The criteria ensure that any organization seeking to benefit from state and federal tax dollars intended for library services are legitimate entities that maintain basic service levels
- Library accreditation criteria set basic standards to assure statewide equity in the provision of library services
- The minimum standards were developed over decades with input from library stakeholders and local governments from across the state, from all sizes of communities, to ensure that Texans have access to library service that meets basic needs
- Setting minimum criteria for participation in state and local programs is a key function of government accountability, and is essential to responsible stewardship of public funds
- Accreditation, and meeting the minimum criteria, is voluntary and 93% of Texas public libraries meet or exceed the standards
- Accreditation, which has been in place for several decades, has increased the quality of library service to all Texans
- Every \$1 invested in public libraries returns \$4.64 in economic benefits; therefore, every \$1 reduction in public library investment reduces economic benefits and services by \$4.64

### **Key Points – SB 902**

- Prohibits TSLAC from requiring minimum criteria relating to local operating expenditures, collections based on publication date, hours of operation, and the number or classification of library employees
- Effectively removes most criteria for public library accreditation
- Would diminish the quality of library services throughout the state
- Dilutes and devalues legitimate public library service by eliminating common baselines for professionalism, services and resources
- Threatens TSLAC's ability to ensure that state and funds are used responsibly for the public benefit as intended

### **Share Your Story:**

- Impact on your library and community; staffing, funding, local support
- Importance of minimum accreditation standards to ensuring quality library services in your community
- Your accreditation status and experience