



## Return of Library Materials SB466/AB609

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This bill will revise WI Statutes Ch 43.30 to make it clear that public libraries may share limited information with appropriate third parties for the express purpose of retrieving overdue library materials or collecting replacement costs for lost library materials.

The Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) has endorsed this bill in support of local library boards protecting the community assets of their libraries. WLA supports this bill because:

- Librarians are frugal and attentive guardians of the public's assets.
- Libraries respect and protect the privacy rights of citizens who utilize library services and resources.
- This bill strikes the proper balance between patron privacy and the protection of public assets while providing libraries with clear statutory support.
- Information to be disclosed is limited to the individual's name, contact information, amount owed and the number and types of overdue materials (NOT the titles of the materials)
- The legislation is enabling, not mandatory. No library board will be obligated to contract with a collection agency. No law enforcement agency will be obligated to retrieve library materials or collect amounts owed for lost items.
- The bill is directed at return of materials and replacement costs, not ordinary "nickel and dime" library fines.

More than 50 Wisconsin libraries contract with Unique Management Service and its Library Division, which uses a soft but effective approach with delinquent borrowers. For example, over the past twelve years the Eau Claire Public Library has recovered \$353,672 for materials purchased with local tax dollars, at a cost of \$72,870 in management fees, demonstrating a five to one return on investment.

It is expected that local communities choosing to use some variant of law enforcement assistance would craft mutual agreements that take both the library board/library policies and municipal or county law enforcement policies into account. In other words, it's ultimately a matter of local control, with both parties participating in constructing and implementing a policy that fits the community.

**Please support SB466/AB609 to ensure that local library boards can use effective means to get library materials returned for public use. Thank you!**