

Texas State Legislature Testimony: April 17 & 28, 1997
Hayes Davenport, Valley View Elementary, Eanes Independent School District

Hi, my name is Hayes Davenport and I'm a fifth grader at Valley View Elementary in the Eanes school district. I'm here to talk about libraries since I spend a lot of time at them and they have meant a lot to me ever since I learned to read. Our family albums are full of pictures of me carrying stacks of books out of different libraries. The stacks were taller than I was, but not one librarian ever suggested I put a few books back. In fact, they encouraged even more! Sooner or later I hope to become a successful author and to see my name on the library shelves right between Roald Dahl and Charles Dickens. If that ever happens, part of the credit would have to go to all those librarians who got me started.

When I was at the Westbank Library last week, I noticed that a gray-haired senior citizen was volunteering right alongside a green-haired teenager. They were both laughing while checking out books to a toddler and her mother. I liked the way so many different generations were using the library and having fun at the same time.

The only thing I would change about our library is its size. I wish it could house a lot more books! When I ask my parents why our library can't be bigger, they always say the same thing...money. Well, when I heard that you are considering a bill that would allow a half a penny tax to be added to neighborhood purchases and then used for our library I thought "what a no-brainer." I can't think of anyone who would object to spending a half a penny to stock the library shelves and help children develop a lifelong love for reading. And as the old Christmas song goes, "If they haven't got a hapenny, then God bless them!"

During the last month we've been studying about the American Revolution in my fifth grade social studies class and I've learned that even 200 years ago our country's leaders had to stand up for what they believed was right and make tough taxation decisions like the Stamp Act and the Townshend Act.

You're sort of in that same boat today, aren't you? Well, I know that I don't have a vote, but I wish I were as articulate as Thomas Jefferson or as passionate as Patrick Henry. Maybe then I could convince you that by voting for this bill and our libraries, you're really voting for our children's minds for generations to come. And if you vote for strong minds today, then when we kids are sitting in your chairs, we'll be able to make well-informed, strong decisions. How can you lose?

Thank you so much for letting me have a chance to speak about what my friends and I so strongly believe. If you vote for this bill, we'll know that what my teacher has been telling us is true... our government really is a voice for the people, including us short ones!