

# WASHOE COUNTY QUESTION NO. 1

## Renew Washoe Libraries Resolution

Shall the Board of County Commissioners of Washoe County be allowed to levy an ad valorem tax in the amount of up to \$0.02 per \$100 assessed valuation for a period of 30 years to raise approximately \$4,500,000 in fiscal year 2025-2026 and thereafter the amount generated by a levy of up to \$0.02 per \$100 assessed valuation against the then applicable assessed value of property in the County for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, equipping, operating, and maintaining library facilities for the County?

Yes  No

### EXPLANATION & ARGUMENTS

**EXPLANATION— A “Yes” vote would permit Washoe County to levy up to \$0.02 per \$100.00 assessed valuation for 30 years for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, equipping, operating, and maintaining library facilities for the County. The specific anticipated uses of the funds are:**

- Renovation and improvements to South Valleys and Spanish Springs Libraries.
- Construction of a new North Valleys Library.
- Expansion of library services and reach through Bookmobile and Book Vending Machine services in the North Valleys, Spanish Springs, and South Valleys regions.

**A “No” vote means funds necessary to maintain current staffing levels, materials collection budget, technology budget, and weekend and evening service hours at library branches would not be raised.**

**DESCRIPTION OF ANTICIPATED FINANCIAL EFFECT—** The existing \$0.02 for every \$100 is within the current statutory maximum of \$3.66 for every \$100. The tax will terminate in approximately 30 years from the date of implementation.

**ARGUMENT IN FAVOR—** A “yes” vote on WC-1 Renew Washoe County Libraries means Washoe County citizens will receive even better library services and won’t pay more in taxes. Voting “yes” keeps taxes the same, and continues the benefits of the 1994 voter-approved tax. This has provided for the things we love about our libraries: newer and better facilities, open weekends and evenings, and better technology.

If renewed, with your “yes” vote, WC-1 provides a stable and predictable source of funds for libraries. The Library System will continue to provide the same great services, and make additional improvements, including: constructing a new North Valleys library, upgrading older facilities, utilizing existing Bookmobiles, kiosks and book vending machines, and introducing other innovations. Physical and digital collections will continue to grow, and staff to provide all these services will not be reduced.

All of this, at no additional cost to you. The future of strong library services is in your hands. Let’s ensure their continued excellence and improvement. Vote yes on WC-1.

*The above argument was submitted by the Ballot Question Committee composed of citizens in favor of passage of this question as provided for in NRS 295.121*

**ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION**— Vote No on WC-1. Granting a dedicated tax stream to the Washoe County Public Library prevents County taxpayers from deciding, through their elected Commissioners, how much money the public library merits annually. WC-1 excuses the Washoe County Public Library’s management from pursuing private funding sources and justifying the Library’s spending.

WC-1’s allocation represents less than a quarter of the library’s budget, which illustrates why the threats of massive layoffs and service cuts are exaggerated.

Donations to the Library, including from Friends of the Library, amount to just over 3% of the budget, showing how little attention the Library’s leadership has paid to what could be a more significant funding source.

The Library should do as other Washoe County bodies and ask the County Commission to increase its appropriation to maintain adequate service levels, and responsibly justify it instead of requiring a dedicated revenue stream. Given the many needs our community has, the Washoe County Public Library should first demonstrate efficient and creative resource management, which includes developing sustainable commercial revenue, as well as a robust donation function, before asking the taxpayers to pay for everything.

*The above argument was submitted by the Ballot Question Committee composed of citizens in opposition of passage of this question as provided for in NRS 295.121*

**REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR**— None of the projects or goals listed in the argument supporting WC-1 Renew Washoe County Libraries require a dedicated tax stream. The predetermined two cents per \$100 valuation allows the Library Director and Board to select and proceed with expensive capital projects without any input of the County Commission or the taxpayers. It enables continued funding for programs regardless of how cost-effective they are.

This use, or any other use, of a dedicated tax stream encourages public spending without accountability.

The Library Director, and his Board of Trustees, should trust Washoe County taxpayers, acting through their Commissioners, to thoughtfully consider spending proposals brought to them and respect their decisions, rather than looking for an end-around.

*The above rebuttal was submitted by the Ballot Question Committee composed of citizens in opposition of passage of this question as provided for in NRS 295.121*

**REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION**— A “yes” vote on WC-1 tells County Commissioners to make the library a priority. Our libraries are valuable community assets that need predictable, stable funding to provide the quality services we enjoy.

Special funds are not unique to the Library. The Library System is one of 16 County departments, including senior services, child, protective services, and others that are funded through this well-established and effective practice.

Without passage of WC-1, the Library will lose one-quarter of its funding. This will result in cutbacks to weekend and evening hours. It will negatively affect improvements in technology and facilities.

Let’s keep our libraries thriving, free and open for everyone to enjoy. Vote “yes” on WC-1.

*The above rebuttal was submitted by the Ballot Question Committee composed of citizens in favor of passage of this question as provided for in NRS 295.121*