



## H.385 and S.226 Legislative Brief (2014)

### Legislation Under Consideration: **Vermont House Bill H.385 & Senate Bill S.226**

The VLA board voted in favor of supporting the legislation at our November 2013 meeting. At that point, H.385 had already been introduced in the House and referred to the House Committee on General Housing and Military Affairs. A second bill was introduced in the Senate in January of 2014 and referred to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

What This Legislation Would Do: **If passed as written, both bills would permit libraries to serve beer and wine without the need to obtain a license.** The bills place the following conditions:

- Beverages must be served free of charge
- Beverages must be served by the glass
- Beverages must be served at events on library premises that are open to the public
- At least one library employee will have received training in the service of alcoholic beverages
- The library shall not serve alcoholic beverages to a minor, someone who is intoxicated, or to someone who appears to be intoxicated

### Why This Legislation Is Important:

- **The ability to serve wine, champagne, or beer can help libraries facilitate key fundraising events.** During 2011-2012, Vermont's public libraries relied on private and grant funding for 17% of their budgets. For smaller libraries, private and grant funding made up 40% of their budgets. Vermont is one of only a handful of states that directs no funding in its budget toward public libraries, which increases the need for innovative approaches to fundraising at local levels. The ability to host a wine and cheese event or a champagne toast provides a helpful fundraising tool for libraries to fund programs such as summer reading, digital literacy, community events, and much more.
- **Libraries would be able to celebrate landmarks, milestones, and community events without the time and money necessary to obtain a liquor license.** Libraries could occasionally serve alcoholic refreshments at book readings, openings, or dedications without the direct and indirect costs associated with licensing. This would increase a local library's ability to function as a festive and welcoming space where people can join together in community celebration.