

Keep Our Library Public
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*"A library is a house of hope.
It's a place where we all, whatever our situation, can feed our ideas and develop our dreams."
— Doug Wilhelm*

We write seeking your **ongoing** support to protect the Blasco Memorial Library, Erie County's **house of hope**.

In October 2023, Erie County Executive Brenton Davis abruptly (without public input) leased important public space within the Blasco Library to a private institution — Gannon University. The rock bottom, below-market rate deal — locked in for an astonishing 25 years — was a slap in the face to taxpayers, one compounded after we were subsequently handed a *double digit tax increase*.

If you have been following this story, you know that the problems with this unprecedented lease agreement run far beyond the tax issue: <https://keepourlibrarypublic.com/faqs/>

Public libraries in Erie County were largely built through public investment and generous private donations, including that of Dr. Raymond Blasco, who believed in the sanctity of our public library. Our Blasco Library is vital to both the Common Good, and to advancing the individual, lifelong aspirations of countless citizens of Erie County.

Since last fall, a group of MANY concerned citizens "Keep Our Library Public" (KOLP), has been leading public debate on this vital issue — a debate that should have happened *before* the deal was executed. More recently, we have filed a lawsuit seeking a declaratory judgment to have the lease invalidated. *Our case is a good one.*

We are asking you today to please support our legal challenge to the wholesale giveaway of public space.

If you have given once, *please* consider doing so again. We have partnered with the Every Library Institute — there, you may make a secure (and *anonymous* if preferred) tax deductible donation: <https://www.fundlibraries.org/Erie>. (If desired, change "Regular" to "*Anonymous*" on the Contribution Summary bar.)

If preferred, you may send checks payable to:

Keep Our Library Public, PO Box 8361, Erie PA 16506

(Please note: Checks made out to KOLP, while gratefully accepted, are **NOT** tax-deductible.)

This is an historic moment in the history of Erie County, one that summons the vision Thomas Jefferson held of our great American republic as a "dynamic democracy" requiring participation on every level. When elected officials betray the public trust, the people, Jefferson believed, "may be relied on to set them to rights."

Your fellow citizens of KOLP are determined to **set this right**, to reverse this reckless expenditure of public monies and bullying encroachment on a treasured community asset. Honoring our forebears who built Erie County's **house of hope**, protecting it for our children and grandchildren, requires that we draw the line in the sand now.

We urge you to join us. <https://keepourlibrarypublic.com/>

With deep appreciation,