



Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB 1000,
Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted by John Taube

Dear Chair and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB 1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

While we support the intent of this bill to reduce the financial barriers for children to use the public library, "the devil is in the details." The increase in per-capita funding will make it possible to go fine free for children in Allegany County. I strongly urge the committee to leave the procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems.

Allegany County Libraries have been fortunate to have a capable and committed Board of Trustees who make policy decisions based on the local conditions and needs of our community. We urge the committee to allow the local Boards to do the work they were appointed to. SB524 as it is currently written is a powerful statement of support for public libraries in Maryland, but the mandates regarding reminders and billing notices, how and when to issue refunds should remain local decisions.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program has been crucial to Allegany County's ability to maintain and renovate library facilities. We have benefitted from the grant funds to renovate our South Cumberland Library and replace the roof at our Westernport Library. These renovations would not have been possible without the Public Library Capital Grants Program as it was the key to making it affordable for Allegany County.

Public libraries across the state and the nation are making headlines as usage surges due to our many resources that help job seekers find work and learn new skills. Our facilities and services are also seeing higher volume of usage due our ability to help families stretch their home budgets. Therefore, every capital dollar for this program is vital to our ability to maintain and upgrade our facilities and offer fundamental services to our communities.

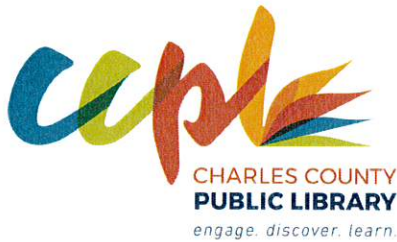
Since its founding in 1971, the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) has provided and expanded access to library materials and services that are unattainable in rural Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our K-12 students use daily, to the public and staff training, SLRC is invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



John E. Taube
Executive Director



Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries -- Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee

February 26, 2020

Submitted by Lloyd Jansen

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

This letter is in support of, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. This bill accomplishes three important and powerful things for public libraries: 1) by adding \$0.40 per capita in FY22 it enables libraries across the state to be **fine free for children**; 2) it extends increases of per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC), which provides vital training and resources for libraries across the state; and 3) it increases funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5, funding that is of special importance to the La Plata community in Charles County, who hopes to see a new state-of-the-art library open in the next few years.

With the support of our Board of Trustees, the Charles County Public Library has been able to provide children's picture books and early readers fine-free since 2018. We also provide customers under 18 with special Kids Cards, which have no fines associated with them, but do have check out limitations. These changes have had a positive impact on our community, and are reducing barriers to getting books into the hands of kids.

The amendments attached to HB1000 simple ensure that procedural matters regarding when and how to bill for lost materials stay under the local control of individual library systems and their Board of Trustees. Providing resources to allow all libraries statewide to be fine free for children is a powerful statement of the values the state legislature holds. Maintaining local control for the procedural details on how to implement the change to fine free for children will allow this important step to be implemented quickly and efficiently.

As someone who spent 18 years as a librarian in California, I can say from experience that the statewide support provided by the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) is a valuable resource unknown to librarians on the West Coast. As an example, staff from SLRC trained Charles County Public Library staff on how to identify and evaluated web sites for Fake News. Library staff in turn gave Fake News presentations to scores of high school students in our local community. Extending the increases in funding for SLRC will make it possible for us to continue to have highly skilled staff, and provide enhanced programming for our residents.

Libraries across the state are in need of repair and replacement. None more so than the La Plata Library. Opened in 1966, the La Plata Library has many challenges in serving a fast growing

community. Not least of which is the fact the building is not ADA compliant. There is no public elevator, yet the public bathrooms are on the building's lower level from the main floor of the library. We hope to build a new library building over the next few years, but such a project would be impossible without some of the funding coming from the Capital Grants Program. Increasing funding for this program from \$5 to \$7 million would help to ensure that desperately needed programs are completed to better serve the state's residents.

Thank you for your continued support for libraries throughout the state.

Yours truly,

Lloyd Jansen
Acting Deputy Director
Charles County Public Library



ENOCH PRATT
free LIBRARY

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB 1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB 1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Board of Library Trustees and Baltimore City Government, the Enoch Pratt Free Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since June of 2018. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

We thank the bill sponsors for leaving implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Policy decisions for public libraries have historically been left in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees. The only remaining objection to the text of the bill is that it specifies when a library can send a billing notice. This detail should remain a local decision. However, even with that unnecessarily specific detail, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their caregivers.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding which the Enoch Pratt Free Library has used to address its aging building infrastructure. We are utilizing \$1.0 million in State support matched by more than \$2.0 million in City and private gifts to renovate the Hampden library which is more than 100 years old. It will be completely modernized and for the first time in its history, have community meeting room and program space. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

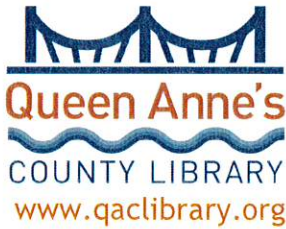
Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heidi Daniel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Heidi Daniel

Chief Executive Officer, Enoch Pratt Free Library



Centreville 121 South Commerce St., Centreville, MD, 21617 | 410-758-0980

Kent Island 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD, 21666 | 410-643-8161

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB 1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted by Janet Salazar

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of the Queen Anne's County Library's Board of Library Trustees and Queen Anne's County Government, Queen Anne's County Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since September of 2019. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by Queen Anne's County's general fund. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of Queen Anne's County Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which Queen Anne's County Library would not be embarking on a building program to expand Queen Anne's County Library Kent Island Branch. We are thrilled to be planning a 10,882 SF addition to the existing facility which is less than 10,000 SF and inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to

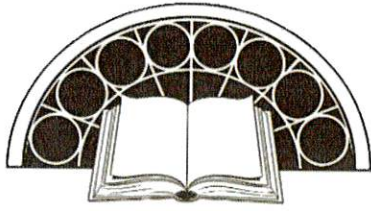
public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center** (SLRC) is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Janet Salazar
Director, Queen Anne's County Library



DORCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

303 Gay Street
Cambridge MD 21613
(410) 228-7331

222 S. Main Street
Hurlock MD 21643
(410) 943-4331

Crystal Henningsen, Director • crystalh@dorchesterlibrary.org

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee

February 26, 2020

Submitted by Crystal Henningsen

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of Dorchester County Public Library's Board of Library Trustees, the Dorchester County Public Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since January 1, 2020. This bill would aid in restoring diminished revenue previously gained through patron fines. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of the Dorchester County Public Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access. As expected, based on national research, we have not seen our return rates decrease significantly. Instead, our good will in the community has increased and former patrons are once again returning to the library. Rather than compromise access to available materials, the removal of fines has increased the provision of quality services for the entire community.

Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding.

I thank the bill sponsors for leaving implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Policy decisions for public libraries have historically been left in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees. My only remaining objection to the text of the bill is that it specifies when a library can send a reminder billing notice. This detail should remain a local decision. However, even with that unnecessarily specific detail, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their caregivers.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the Dorchester County Public Library would not be embarking on a building project to

replace the Hurlock Branch Library. We are thrilled to be planning an 8,500 SF facility to replace the current library which is less than 4,000 SF and wholly inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Crystal Henningsen
Director, Dorchester County Public Library



Testimony in support of HB 1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020

Charles “Skip” Auld, CEO, Anne Arundel County Public Library System

Dear Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I'm testifying in support, with amendments, of HB 1000 – The Building Lifelong Learners Act. Thanks to support from our County Executive and Council, Anne Arundel County Public Library went fine free for children's and teen materials in January and waived past fines to give many of our customers a clean slate.

I'd like to share a story of how we are already seeing the impact this policy change is making in the lives of our residents. Last month, a mom came into our Maryland City at Russett Library with credit card and an apology in hand. She and her children had checked out DVDs and books in the summer but then were faced with an unexpected crisis and hospitalization. Of course, returning library materials was the farthest thing from her mind. Her account was referred to collections and she had received several notices.

Her children missed the library and wanted to check out books, but she made excuses and never brought them back because she was embarrassed. After the new year, she “found money” and was fully prepared to pay the more than \$300 in fines and fees for the items that were overdue so her family could use the library again. She didn't know about the amnesty or the change to the library's fine policy. When she found out that she only had to pay the \$20 referral fee for being sent to collections, she was so overcome with relief and joy that she cried. She thanked us profusely because her children could once again enjoy all that the library had to offer. This is why we do what we do – to serve our community and break down barriers to access.

Before we launched this program, 20% of all children's library cards in our county were blocked because of overdue fines. Those boys and girls from Brooklyn Park, Annapolis, Deale and countless cities and towns in Anne Arundel County couldn't check out a beloved copy of *Where the Sidewalk Ends* or *Harry Potter*. These same kids couldn't take advantage of free online tutoring or use library computers. We believed this was unacceptable and wanted to do something about it.

Overdue fines place a paralyzing burden on lower-income families. My wife, formerly a librarian, still speaks about her experience working the circulation desk in a Richmond Library 10 years ago. Often, there would be two Moms in line. The first one would have armloads of books for her kids to take home. The second Mom would have a single book and tell her child, “We can only take out this one book and when you're finished, we'll bring it back and get another one.”

This miserly, or scarcity, approach to her family's reading was because of experience at the library with overdue fees being charged that meant making the decision one week or another to either buy groceries or pay overdue fines. A \$5 or \$10 fine which can easily be paid by middle-income families is a real burden on lower-income families. Whereas the middle-income family can think “I'm helping the library,” the lower-income family must decide between basic necessities and using the library.

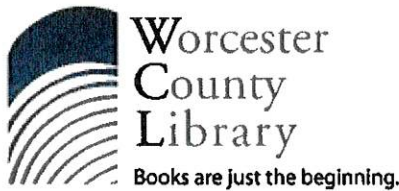
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We want to promote robust use of the library. Especially for the success of our children. Study after study shows that reading, learning and playing are absolutely critical to early learning that sets the stage for lifelong accomplishment. Getting rid of overdue fines throughout the State of Maryland will go a long way toward enabling these results.

Why is this issue coming up now? In the case of Anne Arundel, we became aware of St. Paul Public Library getting rid of fines in 2017 and Columbus, Ohio doing the same a year earlier. Many other libraries in Maryland have been getting rid of overdue fines, and some have wanted to do so but need to be able to replace at least part of the revenue given up by going fine-free. You can help them better serve their communities.

In Anne Arundel County, we are taking things one step further. Our FY2021 county budget request asks for funding to replace revenue to allow us to go fine free for all 570,000 residents. We believe it's the natural next step to breaking down barriers to access, leveling the playing field of all residents and opens up the tremendous services and resources the library has to offer to those who need it most.

The impact of these actions is enormous, and I commend the General Assembly for considering HB1000 to eliminate fines for all children and teens throughout the State of Maryland. I support the friendly amendments that have been negotiated with the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators. Thank you for your efforts to help make more families library users again.



Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee

February 24, 2020

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is a strong statement of the state’s support of public libraries and is intended to help public libraries offer fine-free service to children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, increase funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extend per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Worcester County Library has been fine-free for children’s items since 2010. In November 2019, the trustees and staff removed remaining barriers to library access by proudly extending the fine-free policy to all items. Currently Maryland has seven fine-free public library systems, and eleven others have some variation of being fine-free for children. The remaining systems waive fines whenever possible, but depend on fine revenue to balance their budgets. I ask the committee to allow Maryland’s 24 public library systems to make their own, local decisions about fines, when to send billing notices, and how to issue refunds. The Boards of Library Trustees around the state are working hard to promote literacy and champion learning experiences for children. They recognize the need to strive for unrestricted library access for children, and understand how to implement procedures that will best work in their system.

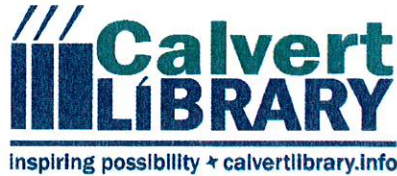
Maryland’s Public Library Capital Grant program has distributed \$60,025,000 since FY2008 and generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in matching local funds. Worcester County’s Berlin Branch Library opened in 2018 and received over \$1.9 million toward construction costs. The prospect of matching state grants for the project was a persuasive factor to County Administrators and County Commissioners.

The State Library Resource Centers (SLRC) maximizes the use of public funds by facilitating resource and information sharing. Increasing funding to SLRC would benefit all Maryland libraries and citizens. SLRC services are efficient, effective, and empower local library systems such as Worcester County Library by supporting workforce development programs, free internet and computer access, and early literacy initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ranck
Director



Carrie Willson, Executive Director • cwillson@calvertlibrary.info
850 Costley Way • Prince Frederick, MD 20678 • 410-535-0291 • 301-855-1862

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted by Carrie Willson

Dear Chairman Kaiser. Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of Calvert Library’s Board of Library Trustees and Calvert County Government, Calvert Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since March of 2019. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by Calvert County’s general fund. The amended language preserves some of the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of Calvert Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding.

I thank the bill sponsors for leaving implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland’s 24 public library systems. Policy decisions for public libraries have historically been left in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees. My only remaining objection to the text of the bill is that it specifies when a library can send a reminder billing notice. This detail should remain a local decision. However, even with that unnecessarily specific detail, this bill is a powerful statement of the state’s support of public libraries, our youngest users and their caregivers.

Maryland’s **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which Calvert Library would not be embarking on a building program to replace Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch. We are thrilled to be planning a 16,000 SF facility to



replace the current library which is less than 5,000 SF and wholly inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



Carrie Willson

Executive Director, Calvert Library

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted Morgan Miller, Director

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, **HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act**. The bill provides comprehensive state support to public libraries through a variety of measures that ensure access to life-changing library services and spaces for all Marylanders. More specifically, it is intended to empower public libraries fully establish fine-free materials borrowing for children and teens by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the state library capital construction grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and it extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Like many public library systems throughout the state, the Cecil County Public Library system has initiated fine-free borrowing programs that have expanded access to our valuable learning resources for children and youth, such as our Student Virtual Library Card partnership with the Cecil County Public Schools and our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program. While fines and fees have represented a traditional source of operating revenue for libraries for many decades, we recognize that they also create barriers for many of our most vulnerable citizens, essentially undermining our missions. SB 524, through an additional \$0.40 per capita increase in FY22, will help CCPL as well as other library systems throughout the state to become fully fine-free for children in the near future, making Maryland’s public libraries the first in the nation to take such a powerful and influential step.

In relation to carrying out this legislation on a procedural level, I strongly urge this committee to remove procedural details from this bill and defer implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland’s 24 public library systems and their governing Boards of Library Trustees, whose powers and duties encompass operational matters and are outlined in the Maryland Education Article. These Boards, their Directors, and their staff, are most knowledgeable of their local communities, as well as their unique funding mechanisms and operating standards.

As the director of a public library system that has been awarded more \$4.25 million in construction funds through **Maryland Library Capital Grant Program**, I can attest to the success of this legislation over the past 10 years, as well as its need for expansion. This program has helped the Cecil County Public Library system leverage millions of dollars in local funding to renovate multiple libraries, perform energy efficiency upgrades, install a solar powered canopy with electric charging stations at our main library, and construct our first new library in more than a decade- the new North East Branch Library, which will open to the public this time next year. Support for this project has been so strong that our county’s state legislative leaders pursued and were awarded a local matching bond to aid in the construction of an early learning center in the new library. Since this critical state program was created in 2008, it has leveraged more than \$350,000,000 in state construction dollars at the local level and ensured that our library buildings remain



vibrant, sustainable, and highly responsive to our communities who rely on them. Yet during this time, the program has seen no funding increase despite the increase in library construction projects throughout the state as well annual escalations in construction costs. SB524 is an important first measure toward better aligning this grant program with the library construction funding needs of all Maryland counties.

I also serve on the Oversight Commission for the **State Library Resource Center** and ask for your support of its per capita funding increase as outlined in this bill. An investment in SLRC is magnified not only across Maryland's public libraries, but its school and academic libraries as well. From statewide internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users.

Sincerely,



Morgan Miller, Director



Award Winner
National Medal

(410) 996-1055 | www.cecil.ebranch.info | 301 Newark Avenue, Elkton, MD 21921

Eastern Shore REGIONAL LIBRARY

31901 Tri-County Way Suite 116-B Salisbury, MD 21801 ph: 410-742-1537 fax: 410-548-5807

**Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries - Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted by John Venditta, Administrator, Eastern Shore Regional Library**

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Over the last year, four of the eight county library systems supported by the Eastern Shore Regional Library converted to fine-free for all users. The other four systems are in various stages of the conversion to fine-free. ESRL applauds the foresight shown by the Boards of all eight of these library systems as well as all of the systems in Maryland that view fines as an impediment to access. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by the county governments of these institutions. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that makes going fine-free possible. As expected based on national research, the fine-free systems on the Eastern Shore have not seen return rates decrease significantly and their level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the public libraries on the Eastern Shore would not be able to replace libraries which are wholly inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet

the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



John C. Venditta
Administrator, Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc.



**Harford County
Public Library**

1221-A Brass Mill Road • Belcamp, Maryland 21017
410.273.5600 • TTY: 410.838.3371
FAX: 410.273.5606

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee

February 26, 2020

Submitted by Mary Hastler, CEO, Harford County Public Library

Dear Chairman: Kaiser. Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Please support, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

The Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees is a committed and engaged group of community residents that reflect the diversity of the county. As one of their major responsibilities, they establish policy for the governing of the Harford County Public Library system. Under the direction of the Library Board of Trustees, the library has implemented many activities that support and nurture the love of reading and exploration for our very youngest and most vulnerable customers and their families. The State of Maryland has the reputation of being Library Heaven and it is because of the commitment to providing excellent public library services throughout the state.

On behalf of our community, I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is a critical source of funding for Harford County Public Library and has provided much needed funding for several building renovation projects and ensuring the sustainability of our physical resources. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008,



Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB 1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted by Tonya Aikens, HCLS President & CEO

Dear Chair Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, *with amendments*, HB 1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be **fine-free** for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, increasing the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extending increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Suggested amendments attempt to preserve local control of procedures by our Board of Trustees and professional staff.

I thank the bill sponsors for amended text that omits “special collections” such as tools, framed art, and cake pans. These are high-demand, and sometimes rare items, that are smaller in quantity with higher collection value and replacement costs than print materials.

Additionally, I thank the bill sponsors for amended text that moves the implementation of this bill from July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021. The amended date provides time to inform our community of the policy changes and to work with our staff to implement the new policy. The amended date also aligns with the \$.40 per capita increase in FY 22. The increase equates to approximately 10% of the approximate \$236,000 revenue gap the bill creates for our library system. The amended dates therefore provide critical time to seek additional local funding to address the revenue gap.

My remaining objection to the bill text is the specification of when a library may send a reminder billing notice. I strongly urge this committee to *leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland’s 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees* and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland.

Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder, including Howard County, employ liberal waiving of fines. *When to send reminder billing notices are, and should remain, local decisions.* Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state’s support of public libraries, our youngest users, and their families.



Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is a vital source of funding that helped make it possible to expand and enhance services to the Howard County community, providing \$4.2M between fiscal years 2008 and 2013 for design and construction of Howard County Library System's Miller Branch. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60M has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350M in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our specialists, customers, and K-12 students use daily, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our customers. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students, and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens
President & CEO



Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted by Thomas Vose

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County would like to add its voice in support of HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act, which has the laudable goal of enabling all public libraries in the State to be fine-free for children by providing compensatory funding through the per capita State allotment to County library systems. As this bill would also increase funding for the Capital Grant program and the State Library Resource Center, we view it as a positive development for libraries throughout Maryland.

One of the fundamental goals of libraries, as you know, is to enable readers to obtain the materials they need to develop their reading skills, to discover new interests, and to help them obtain the information they need to make a difference in their lives. While lost items must be billed for until returned so as to discourage theft, and local library boards should continue to set system policies for checkout terms and billing notices, we welcome this step - overdue fees should be no barrier for children to obtain the books they need, and penalizing our young patrons for late returns is a practice we look forward to ending. With this bill potentially offsetting the impact to our funding from the loss of revenue, we hope this will lead to a great new direction for Maryland's libraries.

I would also like to add a word about the Capital Grant program – support for this has been essential for library systems all through the State to enable them to develop new buildings and retrofit old ones to meet 21st century needs. We here at Garrett County look forward to participating in this program with our Friendsville branch when the time comes – as a “temporary” structure built in 1970, it badly needs replacement.

I appreciate your consideration on this issue and hope you will support its advancement.

Sincerely,

Thomas Vose
Director

Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

6 N. Second St., Oakland, MD 21550 ● www.relib.net ● 301-334-3998
Accident + Friendsville + Grantsville + Kitzmiller + Oakland



SOMERSET
COUNTY LIBRARY

Explore • Learn • Dream • Become

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB 1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee

February 26, 2020

Submitted by Ann Smith

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB 1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and it extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

The Somerset County Library has had fine-free student cards since the 2018-2019 school year and has been fine-free for all users since August of 2019. This bill would aid in restoring funding lost during these reductions in fine receipts. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of the Somerset Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Crisfield Princess Anne Erwell

11767 Beechwood Street, Princess Anne, MD 21853

phone: 410.651.0852

fax: 410.651.1388

www.somelibrary.org

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the Crisfield Library would not have been able to be constructed. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Ann Smith

President, Somerset County Library Board of Trustees



Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020

Submitted by Michael Blackwell

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I support, with amendments, HB1000 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill will empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22. It also it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

St. Mary's County Library has already made some children's materials fine free, and we also offer a "Kid's Card" (ages birth – 17) that allow items (except DVDs—our is a reading initiative) to be checked out without fines. Next school year, we are offering a SMART (St. Mary's Access to Research and Technology) card to all students in St. Mary's County Public Schools. This bill would nevertheless provide funding to help us continue fine-free services to all children and teens. ages. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that allows to go offer materials without charge to young minds, ensuring timely return of materials without fine. Our library trustees and employees are delighted to remove barriers to service, especially among the underserved and families in economic need.

Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are currently bound by revenue constraints that this bill would address. Making library service free for all Maryland children is a laudable goal!

Thank you to the bill sponsors for leaving implementation of specific policies to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Policy decisions for public libraries have historically been left in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees. My only remaining objection to the text of the bill is that it specifies when a library can send a reminder billing notice. This detail should remain a local decision. However, even with that unnecessarily specific detail, this bill is a powerful statement of your support for public libraries and for growing young minds and their families.

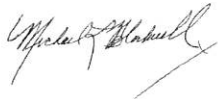
Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding. Without it, St. Mary's County Public Library would not be opening our new Leonardtown Library—please plan on joining us on April 28, 2020! In many counties, commissioners are more willing to undertake new construction or substantial renovation because of this state aid. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has

been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access (and so ensuring fuller response to the 2020 Census), to the databases that our librarians, customers, and students use daily, to training on topics for employees and public, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, families, in students in public or private schools or in home-schooling, in seniors, indeed in millions of library users every year.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Blackwell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Blackwell
Director
St. Mary's County Library
23250 Hollywood Rd
Leonardtown, MD 20650
mblackwell@stmalib.org
301-475-2846 x5013



**Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB 1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee**

February 26, 2020

Submitted by: Paula Miller, Director, Baltimore County Public Library

Dear Chairman Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB 1000 “Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act”.

All three parts of this bill are a wise investment in public libraries and the communities they serve.

- 1) **Fine-Free for Children:** Fine-free for children’s materials represents a tremendous opportunity to equalize access to books and learning materials for children using our public libraries. It will also put Maryland on the national library landscape: “The Free State Goes Fine-Free for Kids”. The fine-free movement in libraries arose from a greater awareness of the obstacle that fines present to kids whose families cannot afford to pay their fines and then are blocked from access. Not surprisingly, these also tend to be the children whose families cannot afford to buy books. Children in those families then lose the opportunity to have books in the home, to be exposed to more reading by both adults and other family members, and to develop a larger vocabulary at an early age through exposure to words and books. Especially in the early years, this can be very detrimental to the development and progression of a child’s reading skills, and, as research has shown, ultimately to the child’s success in school and life. Fine-free reinforces values that libraries hold dear – equity of access to educational support materials, inclusion, the right of every kid to enjoy the value and pleasure of reading, and an understanding of libraries as gracious space and as an instrument of democracy.

My understanding is that language in the bill has been revised to allow for flexibility in its application by the individual counties. Language on the mechanics of how this will work within each individual library system (determining any exceptions like in-demand items; determining when/how to wipe out previous fines; determining when to bill for items not returned or when/how to issue a refund) should be flexible and acknowledge the role of the local Library Board, making it easier and quicker for each County, each Library Board, and each library administration and staff to implement fine-free for their system.

Finally, I appreciate the assistance of some state funding to cover the costs of implementing a fine-free policy. Baltimore County Public Library’s Board has taken significant steps in this direction, but we have not fully implemented fine-free on all children’s materials. The proposed increase will not fully cover the cost of implementing fine-free at BCPL, but we are committed to the philosophy of children being able to read and learn equitably. The additional state funds are immensely appreciated, and, in discussion with the County, we expect to find a way to cover the remainder of lost revenue from children’s fines.



- 2) **Public Library Capital Grant Program:** Our Library Board of Trustees is excited to see the proposal for the capital funds increase from \$5 million annually to \$7.5 million annually. Many of our libraries across the state are dealing with aging infrastructure as well as community requests for buildings that are in better condition and that meet the needs of today's users. BCPL could not have done most of our recent building renovation projects without the assistance of state capital funds. We have been approved for grants totaling \$4.4M in assistance for capital projects over the last decade, including renovations for our Randallstown, Reisterstown, and Catonsville branches as well as a new branch in Sollers Point.

- 3) **State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Funding:** The State Library Resource Center (SLRC), housed and operated by the Enoch Pratt Free Library, provides critical resources, programs, and training to all libraries across the state. Extending the scheduled increases to the per capita funding necessary to maintain those services strengthens collaboration, consistency, and communication across the entire Maryland library network. Services provided by SLRC equalize opportunities and access and provide an important equity component for library service to all residents of Maryland.

Baltimore County Public Library is happy to support this innovative bill, with amendments that provide local control around the complicated issues involved in implementation. All three parts of HB 1000 are important to the ongoing high-quality library service that public libraries provide here in Maryland. Thank you for your previous, and current, support to help libraries continue to serve their communities' most pressing needs.

Paula J. Miller

Paula J. Miller
Director, Baltimore County Public Library

Testimony in support, with amendments, of HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2020
Submitted by Dana Newman

I am writing to support, with amendments, HB1000, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Public Library Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

The Talbot County Free Library (TCFL) charges children's fines for library materials that are returned after the due date. This bill if passed with the amendments offered attempts to preserve the local control that is necessary for TCFL to consider the possibility of eliminating children's fines in the future. Fines serve as a barrier for some children in our County to be able to freely access books and other library materials. All children in our County should be able to access books freely for research, discovery and pleasure as well as to help them develop a reading habit that will help support their success in school. I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but is bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program is an invaluable and critical source of funding without which TCFL and Talbot County would not be able to expand the St. Michaels Library. We are thrilled to be planning a renovation and expansion of that library to almost 12,000 SF to expand and upgrade the current library which is wholly inadequate to meet community needs. This funding was also critical for the expansion of the Easton library back in 2012. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds. Extending funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Dana Newman

Director, Talbot County Free Library