



ENOCH PRATT
free LIBRARY

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 848: Enoch Pratt Free Library Capital Project Funding sponsored by Senator Mary Washington. With 22 locations across Baltimore, the Pratt Library is a vital community resource, as evidenced by the recent compliment cards submitted by customers:

*“Thank you for the professionalism, the courtesy, the availability...exemplary community service!”
Pratt Library Northwood Branch customer*

*“Ms. Sandra was exceptional in serving us, getting us new library cards, and helping my autistic adult sons with renewals of their cards..... My 10-year old son said this was a good day today.”
Pratt Library Northwood Branch customer*

*“I visited today and was amazed that there was a tutor here! I had my granddaughter with me and she really needed help.”
Pratt Library Northwood Branch customer*

Each of these customers received library services at the Pratt’s Northwood branch which serves the communities of Hillen, Original Northwood, New Northwood, Ednor Gardens, Montebello, and Morgan State University. But deteriorating infrastructure conditions **forced the library in Northwood to close for 58 days last Fiscal Year**. That means for **20% of the year**, that community was left without a place to access free internet, free tutors, a safe space, friendly faces, new technology, after school programs, and more. A recent Facility Condition Report of the Northwood branch conducted by an outside vendor found **every piece of the building** from the roof, to the walls, to the HVAC system to be either in a critical state, potentially critical, or in need of replacement.

Unfortunately, this is a widespread issue across the Pratt Library system, which has some of the oldest libraries in the state with **only two built this century**. A recent building assessment found that the **total cost to stabilize Pratt Library infrastructure is \$197,300,000**. Those improvements include structural upgrades and repairs to ensure long-term integrity of buildings, replacing antiquated systems with energy-efficient new technology, modernization of public spaces to improve user experience, and more.



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Pratt Library leaders have been innovative in trying to continue serving our community. Private funding has been raised to refresh several library spaces. The Pratt is engaged in a new library model with public-private partnerships in several communities. The Library secured American Rescue Plan funding to replace HVAC systems in several branches. And pop-up libraries have been established in partner spaces to serve neighborhoods when libraries close. However, an infusion of funding is needed so the library can continue to meet the vital needs of customers.

The funding provided in Senate Bill 848 will help the library make major strides towards modernization of the Pratt infrastructure. The bill also requires a 10% match of funds from the Pratt Library Board of Trustees. We are committed to that match as an investment in the future of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Together, we can ensure that the doors of our libraries stay open for generations to come. We respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 848.

The Boards of Directors and Trustees
Enoch Pratt Free Library

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Robert S. Killebrew, Jr.

Sandra Berman

Lidia Paz-Baker

February 13th, 2024

To: The United States Senate

Dear Senator Cardin and Van Hollen,

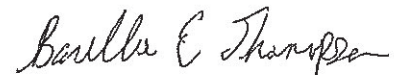
My name is Barellie Thompson. I have been a patron of Enoch Pratt Library since I was in the 8th grade at Winston Middle School in Northeast Baltimore. My father would bring me to the Northwood Branch on Loch Raven Boulevard and Coldspring Avenue where I would spend hours checking out the library's selection of comic book and teen fiction like Harry Potter and Percy Jackson. I was a kid who gravitated towards reading from a young age and had it not been for the free resources provided by Enoch Pratt, I may not have gotten as much exposure to literature as I have.

It is with this background that I feel the impact that funding, or lack thereof, has had on this neighborhood library. In previous years, including last summer in 2023, Northwood has been a nearly unbearable place to be due to an air conditioning system that is not working. Library staff have had to work half days before going to other locations or had to endure with the slight relief provided by fans and dehumidifiers. Patrons, especially our elderly population, have been reluctant to come to Northwood during the hot months to attend programming or utilize its resources, likely preferring to stay home. With everything else that has impacted this library, such as closing due to COVID and the loss of a nearby school, it would be unfortunate if funding becomes another detriment that gets added to the list.

It is my sincere wish that you all take the time to see the importance of supporting the funding of Enoch Pratt Libraries to continue the growth and maintenance of one of Baltimore City's most impactful resources.

Sincerely,

Barellie E. Thompson



443-882-9096

2006 W. Fayette Street

Baltimore, MD 21223



ENOCH PRATT *free* LIBRARY

Ny'ilah Whitaker <nwhitaker@prattlibrary.org>

Senate Bill

1 message

Deloise Clark <dclarkw2@jhmi.edu>

Wed, Feb 14, 2024 at 4:37 PM

To: "nwhitaker@prattlibrary.org" <nwhitaker@prattlibrary.org>

Hello:

The Northwood Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library offers a comfortable and safe environment. Located conveniently from where I live. Everyone is extremely kind, encouraging and helpful. They are very informative and interested in my well-being: socially and literal.

This branch has made me (an introvert) open-up and allow myself to become involved with their many activities, for me "the Book Club", where I can listen to others thoughts and opinions is enjoyable. My husband loves going to the library. He's so much smarter than I am!

It's good to see children on the computers which seem to be readily available.

The branch had a "coat give-away which was a wonderful thing to do for others and the community!

I am a lifetime customer!!

Thank you for being there...

Deloise Clark LPN

EBMC BMS :OB/GYN

1000 E. Eager St.

410-522-9800



Library

1 message

Kay Life is a journey <oliviamylove2009@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 12, 2024 at 4:24 PM

To: "nwhitaker@prattlibrary.org" <nwhitaker@prattlibrary.org>

To whom this may concern : The library has provided a safe haven for learning. My kids utilize their amenities frequently . For example , tutoring services are free and accessible weekly which has assistance my kids . The staff is helpful and friendly . The free wifi allows them to do their interactive assignments . The hours are great for after school homework . They have stem projects that are also free and helps to promote cognitive skills. Most importantly , the children are our future and this library needs funding to improve and continue to assist these humans into becoming knowledgeable and sufficient adults in this community. Thanks for your time and consideration. Mrs . Williams
4433639910. Email : Oliviamylove2009@gmail.com

February 13, 2024

United States Senate

Dear Senators Cardin and Van Hollen,

My name is Alecia L. Dean and I am writing to say how the Northwood Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library has been instrumental in helping me become computer literate, thanks to wonderful computer instructors like Ms. Brenda Dudley.

The free instruction I received on the Microsoft Word Office Suite helps me prepare for a new job since I got laid off at my last position.

The Northwood Branch also offers exciting programs like line dancing, painting, and many other fun activities, all for free.

Therefore, I am pleading for the U. S. Senate to please provide funding for air conditioning and other much needed repairs to a library that is aging and needs to be modernized.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Alecia L. Dean

443-590-6801

Baltimore, MD 21206

February 14, 2024

I am writing a love letter to the Enoch Pratt Free Library. On this Valentine's Day, I call attention to the fact that each library branch is the beating heart of the neighborhood it serves. I've lived within walking distance of the Northwood Branch for over 40 years. It's where my children learned to love reading. It's where I visit at least weekly to satisfy my yearning for new reading material. It's where I meet up with other patrons in book clubs.

As a leader in the Hillen Road Improvement Association, I speak for the community in appreciation of the library's welcome hosting of our monthly neighborhood meetings. For the second year in a row, we are planning a community Plant and Seed Exchange at the library in June. It is events like this that bring neighbors together and provide an environmental education forum.

After school, youngsters gather to do homework and receive tutoring in a safe space. Children participate in story times and hands-on activities.

The Northwood Library is the only branch I know that offers free parking for patrons. Ms. Whitaker has worked with the community to establish a popular seed bank at the library.

I could go on and on about the importance of the Pratt (and especially the Northwood Branch) to our community. But, I'll close by saying that I even made loving use of the clever cut-out valentines provided in the Compass newsletter.

Thank you, Pratt Libraries!

Linnea Anderson
Baltimore, MD 21218
443-301-5451
landersonpr@yahoo.com

6410 Loch Raven Blvd.
Baltimore, MD. 21239
(443) 904-2148
lsanozie@gmail.com

February 15, 2024

Dear EPFL,

I write this letter because I strongly support the Enoch Pratt Free Library in our Baltimore Northwood community.

As a retired Maryland public school teacher, I have been living in Northwood/Idlewood for almost thirty years. I moved here with my family after my teaching in West Africa. One of the first things my children and I did upon our return to the USA was apply for EPFL library cards. I then enrolled them in the EPFL computer program that was being led by a volunteer. EPFL Northwood has been a solid resource for city children and teachers like us. While teaching, I encouraged my students to get library cards, participate in Summer Break events, and discover the world of reading for pleasure. My teaching team would even walk them to the library. Also, I could rely upon Northwood librarians to supply me with resources when available. Now that I'm retired, EPFL Northwood is a lifelong learning destination.

However, the Northwood EPFL site has not been maintained. The superior staff remain dedicated to serving the community, but the government has not funded resources to support them. The beautiful mid-century building needs renovation—most especially HVAC. A temporary bandage of installed air blowers that sounded like airplanes and didn't cool air was an insult to the staff and readers. In fact, one of our monthly community groups stopped, largely because the conditions became unbearable for participants, especially the older ones. Truly, our hearts went out to the librarians and staff who were supposed to be content with this fiasco.

As a Maryland taxpayer and homeowner, I see EPFL Northwood as a tremendous asset to living where I do. It was built about the time I was born. It is now time to invest in the future of our community by improving this facility.

Sincerely,


Lynda Anozie

4625 Kernwood Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21212

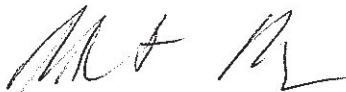
February 15, 2024

Letter of support for Senate Bill 848: Capital Project Funding. This letter specifically supports the Northwood Branch of Enoch Pratt Free Library.

I have been writing and studying at the Northwood Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library since I retired from my teaching position at Loyola University Maryland in 2017. Mr. Johnson was the director when I started coming here regularly. He was always exceptionally helpful and invited me to do a presentation on my children's book ASHANTI TO ZULU: AFRICAN TRADITIONS. I truly enjoyed making the evening presentation to children, parents and seniors. We had a lovely discussion about Africa and African Art. After this presentation Mr. Johnson invited me to make a presentation about Kente cloth and my children's book SPIDER WEAVER: A LEGEND OF KENTE CLOTH at his daughter's private school. The staff at this particular branch are easy to get to know and always eager to help anyone who comes here.

I loved my computer classes, especially senior tech at this branch. The teachers were patient experienced professionals, and the classes were always fun. I took senior tech, the gmail basics class and google workspace. I enjoyed the classes so much that I took them more than once! These classes are invaluable for seniors and retired folks, many of whom are still trying to catch up with technology or do not have a computer at home. We can always make copies or type a letter here for free. The staff like Mr. Johnson, or Ms. Brenda or Ms. Whitaker are always willing and able to help with the computers or a search for something specific.

This library branch gives me a quiet place with all the technology, help and information that I need to write or research with ease and comfort. It is an invaluable resource for this community. This branch and all of our library branches should be fully supported and funded by our tax dollars. Thank you for your consideration.



Margaret Musgrove, EdD

Professor Emerita

Loyola University

152
Chris Samuels

928 Aragonne Drive
Baltimore, MD 21218
443-509-9268

The Northwood Library Branch mean alot to me. I come to use the computer to get my email and to pay bills and keep up with news and the internet. Often times, I come in to read a book in the branch.

I use this library 5 and ~~some~~ time 6 days a week. I also use the library to take my business calls. This library means so much to me.

Chris Samuels

I am a life long resident (30 years) who has used
this branch continually with my kids, and now
myself. Being a senior citizen now, this branch is
very much needed for the community, and truly
needs vigilant upkeep for your record use. Thank
you

James E. Edwards

410 218 4612
1517 Fenwick RD

JULIA AJA-11

2254395856

atayijulia@gmail.com.

This library has been very helpful to me as a grad student at Morgan State University. It helps me to get resourceful materials aside my school materials and I also get my school assignments printed for free which is very helpful.

The community of cold springs and other neighboring communities will be very happy if this library in Northwood branch is kept in running and in a very conducive environment.

Thank You

JULIA AJA-11





Letter to Senate

1 message

James Hart <j.hart340@icloud.com>
To: Ny'ilah Whitaker <nwhitaker@prattlibrary.org>

Wed, Feb 14, 2024 at 1:46 PM

Hi Ny'ilah,

I am attaching the body of the letter to this email. Let me know if this will work for you.

Cheers,
Jim

The Maryland State Senate
Miller Senate Office Building
[11 Bladen St.](#)
[Annapolis, MD](#)

RE: Bill 848: Capital Project Funding

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Maryland State Senate, February 13, 2024

I am writing on behalf of the Northwood Branch of the Enoch Pratt Library in support of the above-mentioned Bill 848.

I have been attending a 12-Step Recovery Group in the meeting room of that Branch since August of 2023 and have found this to be a wonderful situation.

Ny'ilah Whitaker, the Branch Manager, and her staff, were very helpful in helping our group get started there, and have been more than cooperative every time we meet, which is on a weekly basis. They are always friendly and welcoming.

It seems to be a vibrant part of the community and is always being used by a good number of people. I understand that there are several programs throughout the week that are very helpful to the local neighborhood.

Please take into consideration the usefulness of this Branch and the need for the availability of this valuable community resource.

Very Truly Yours,

Jim Hart
[101 E. Susquehanna Ave.](#)
[Towson, MD, 21286](#)

Feb. 13, 2004

To Whom it May Concern.,

Hello, My name is Melvatta Benjamin. I am a senior and I take computer classes at the Northwood library in Baltimore City. The classes I have taken at this library have help me tremendously. I have applied this knowledge to my job. Many people was amaze at the level of my understanding of the computer.

I also like the many activities the library have provided. The staff is wonderful and very friendly. Ms. Dubbley is a wonderful teacher. she is very patience with the class. Sometime the class is very warm. We were told there wasn't any air condition in the room. I believe that is unfair. Please send extra funds to this library. This Library could use it. Thank you,

Melvatta Benjamin
4114 Raymonn Ave
Balt. MD. 21210

Susan G. Dorsey, Ph.D.
5401 Hamlet Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21214
sgdorsey@gmail.com
443-695-0449

14 February 2024

Maryland General Assembly Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Committee,

I am a patron of the Northwood Branch of the Enoch B. Pratt Free Library, located at 4420 Loch Raven Blvd. Baltimore, Maryland, 21218, and am writing to provide my strongest, unequivocal support for Senate Bill 848 entitled “Enoch Pratt Free Library – Capital Project Funding” sponsored by Senator Washington. The Northwood Branch of the library system is in desperate need of crucial infrastructure repairs. For example, this will be the 3rd or 4th summer in a row that the library will be without air conditioning. When the temperature soars, it necessitates mandatory closure of the branch for safety reasons, suspending critical services to patrons and the community at large. The building also needs imperative upgrades to its infrastructure.

The Northwood Branch serves as a meaningful anchor for the neighborhood and provides much needed community services, including weekly Al-Anon meetings, book clubs, story time for children, robotics and educational programs and free laptop computers for those that qualify, among many others. In addition, the library circulates thousands of fiction and non-fiction books to its patrons annually.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Northwood Branch was one of the hubs that would open for patrons to obtain services that could be provided safely and for me personally, access to books and other materials that had been placed on hold online for pick up. Multiple times per week, Ms. Sandra Scott at the circulation desk would call or email me to let me know that one or more books were available at the library and arrange a time for me to come and pick up the materials. It was often one of the few, if only, outside social interactions that I had during the lockdown phase of the pandemic, and it was so appreciated! Not only was Sandra risking her health to provide patrons with books and materials to combat the drudgery and fatigue of remaining indoors and online, but she always did so with a smile and words of kindness and encouragement. Without qualification, I can truly say that Sandra is a hero of the Enoch B. Pratt Free Library and I know that her job would be easier if the infrastructure issues at the Northwood Branch were resolved—passage of this Senate Bill would make that a reality!

As a frequent patron of the library both during and post-pandemic, I'd also like to express to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members my appreciation and gratitude to all the staff at the

Northwood Branch for exceptionally positive interactions multiple times per week. For example, I frequently discuss my fiction book preferences with Ms. Ny'ilah Whitaker, the Northwood Branch Manager, who is also an avid reader. Based upon those discussions, she has books held at the circulation desk for me written by authors that she intuitively feels that I might like. To me, this goes above and beyond what one might reasonably expect from the administrative management and/or staff at a local library branch. And truly, this type of service and kind support is much needed and appreciated by the neighborhood and patrons of the Northwood Branch.

In closing, thank you for this opportunity to provide my strongest possible letter of support for Senate Bill 848. I sincerely hope that this Bill receives a favorable review and passage as I know how important the work and service that is ongoing at the Northwood Branch is to both me personally and to the neighborhood community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan G. Dorsey".

Susan G. Dorsey Ph.D.

Cynthia L. Renn Ph.D.
5401 Hamlet Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21214

Senator Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 15, 2024

Dear Chairman Guzzone,

As a Baltimore City resident and constituent of City Council District 3 and State Senate District 45, I am writing this letter to provide my strongest support of **SB848** titled **Enoch Pratt Free Library – Capital Project Funding** sponsored by Senator Washington. I am a long-term patron of the Pratt Library system and the Northwood Branch at 4420 Loch Raven Boulevard in particular. The Northwood Branch is a crucial component of the community that provides vital services to local residents that go well beyond simply being a source for the thousands of books in circulation. This library branch serves as a safe place for children to go outside of school hours while their parents are at work. It provides daytime shelter from the extreme heat and cold weather for those community residents who are unhoused. It provides a means for idle hands and minds to be occupied; thus, minimizing their owners' opportunities for involvement in dangerous activities such as crime and substance abuse. It provides a source to find answers to questions that patrons might be too afraid or embarrassed to ask. The more tangible services provided by the Northwood Branch include story time for children, book clubs for adults, robotics programs, ALANON meetings, and free laptops for qualified individuals. And... The list goes on. Those items mentioned here barely scratch the surface of the value of the Northwood Branch Library to the community and serving as a steadfast anchor in the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, the building and infrastructure at the Northwood Branch Library have fallen into disrepair and require urgent upgrades to continue all of the outstanding work that they do. I want to commend the Northwood staff for the tireless effort that they put forth, in often difficult circumstances, to help library patrons and maintain a positive environment. For example, the building's air conditioning system is broken, causing the temperatures indoors to be utterly unreasonable. Yet, the staff members continue to work with a smile on their faces and a pleasant demeanor. Beyond the discomfort caused to the library staff, the lack of air conditioning frequently causes the library to be closed, which suspends the critical services that the neighborhood and community so desperately rely on. The ripple effects of the library closures are enormous and beyond measure. It is of the utmost importance that immediate action be

taken to perform the much-needed repairs to the Northwood Branch Library building and its infrastructure. Passage of SB848 is one step toward making this a reality.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for me to express my strongest and most enthusiastic support for passage of SB848 as well as an avenue to publicly recognize all of the valuable services and outstanding work that the Northwood Branch Library and its staff provide to the neighborhood and community. They deserve support from the State and City that is commensurate with the service that they provide to library patrons. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia L. Renn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a stylized "R".

Cynthia L. Renn, Ph.D.
City Council District 3
State Senate District 45

2/15/2024

Valerie Parker

1232 East Belvedere Ave 51039

My name is Valerie Parker

I have been going to the
Northwood Library for about
fifteen ages. I first was involved
with the knitting classes they
had every two weeks. Later
I found out about the book
club which I have been with
them for ten ages. We met
once a month on Thursdays.

We sometimes had gathering
many writers and after
reading some of the books
we always had discussion
that sometime we could
relate to our own life situation.

The Northwood Library is
convenient in the neighborhood
for many things like I learned
computer classes to help when
I'm online in the library.
I learned how to print out
important paper because at
that time I do not have printer.

My granddaughter live with
me for also a year and she
was involved in the Youth
Program until her mother
came back from arm service

which she went out the country.

cont 2/15/2024

Valerie Parker
1230 East Belvedere Ave 21239

Last ~~the~~ year there was a new group that started at library. This was called My Group which is a group that came from all parts of our community. We was a group that talked about and discuss all kinds of things happen in Maryland, Baltimore City and around the world. We were given a topic to review and then on Thursday we would meet and discuss ^{give} our opinion.