

SB0248 Support Regional Resource Centers SMRLA Tea

Uploaded by: Ashley Teagle

Position: FAV



Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.

Advancing Library Excellence

January 16, 2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of **§ 23.202.1. Libraries – Regional Resource Centers – Governance Requirements (SB0248 Libraries – Regional Resource Centers – Governing Board Membership)**. This bill passed during the 2023 session. However, it was amended by the House Ways and Means Committee during the last week of the session. This amendment arose from a misunderstanding of the regional's responsibilities and the public board member's ability to impact regional policy.

The proposed revision will expand the diversity of the Regional Resource Center Boards and allow for more equitable representation for the communities served. Currently, the Regional Resource Centers have little or no diversity on their Boards and do not reflect the communities served. Board membership consists overwhelmingly of retirees with insufficient equity between groups in the region, including but not limited to racial, gender, and socioeconomic equity.

This revision addresses these issues and brings regional resource centers into alignment with how they serve the community. It is important that the Regional Resource Center Board composition reflect the communities served. Currently, there is very little diversity on the County Library Boards. This change would allow the regionals greater flexibility in recruiting Board members that are aligned with our member libraries' initiatives and the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association's vision of advancing library excellence.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle
CEO

Letter in support of SB0248_Willson_CalvertLibrary

Uploaded by: Carrie Willson

Position: FAV



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Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

January 16, 2024

RE: Senate Bill 248 Libraries – Regional Resource Centers – Governing Board Membership

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of **SB0248 Libraries – Regional Resource Centers – Governing Board Membership**. § 23.202.1. Libraries – Regional Resource Centers – Governance Requirements passed during the 2023 session but was amended by the House Ways and Means Committee during the last week of the session. Unfortunately, the amendment arose from a misunderstanding of the Regional Library's responsibilities.

The proposed revision in SB0248 will expand the diversity of the Regional Resource Center Boards by allowing two community members from each county rather than just one in addition to a member who is also part of the Board of the public library of that county. Calvert Library is making strides to have a diverse board of library trustees that represents the residents of our county. We have diversity of work experience, age, race and gender. However, the board members who are available to serve on our board as well as the Southern Maryland Regional Library Board, are a much more limited subset of our total Board. Providing the Regional Library with the same ability that the county public library has to recruit Board members who represent the breadth of our communities would make all of us better.

This revision addresses these issues and brings regional resource centers into alignment with how they serve the community. It is important that the Regional Resource Center Board composition reflect the communities served.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carrie Willson".

Carrie Willson
Executive Director, Calvert Library



SB 248 - Libraries - Regional Resource Centers - G

Uploaded by: Irene Padilla

Position: FAV



BILL: Senate Bill 248 **DATE:** January 17, 2024

SUBJECT: Libraries – Regional Resource Centers – Governance Requirements **COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy & the Environment

SPEAKER: Irene Padilla, State Librarian **POSITION:** Favorable

EXPLANATION

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is in support of SB 248 and encourages a favorable review. This bill brings Maryland’s regional libraries into compliance with community-based, principled governance structures that employ best practices for a non-profit entity funded by taxpayers.

There are three regional libraries that support the regional resource center network. The Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc. (ESRL) in Salisbury was established in 1992 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit library corporation and represents the libraries in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties. The Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc. in Charlotte Hall was established in 1959 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and represents the libraries in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s counties. The Western Maryland Regional Library in Hagerstown was established in 1967 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and represents the libraries in Allegany, Garrett and Washington Counties. WMRL is administered through a MOU between the participating libraries in the region and the Washington County Free Library (WCFL). The Maryland State Library Agency is responsible for oversight of the regional resource centers.

SB§ 23-202.1 Regional Resource Centers Governance was passed during the 2023 session. In the original bill (SB 831/HB 1115 Libraries - Regional Resource Centers - Governance Requirements), the Board membership consisted of one library trustee from each participating library system; and up to two members of the public from each area served by the participating library systems. 23-202.1(b)(1)(2).

However, this section of the bill was amended prior to the final vote as follows “~~Up to two members~~ **one member of the public from each area served by the participating library systems**” due to a misconception about the role of the regionals and concerns about the public Board members’ presumed influence on library collections and the freedom to read.

The proposed revision will expand the diversity of the Regional Resource Center Boards and allow for more equitable representation for the communities served. Currently, the Regional Resource Centers have little or no diversity on their Boards and do not reflect the communities served. Board membership consists overwhelmingly of retired librarians with insufficient equity

between groups in the region, including but not limited to racial, gender, and socioeconomic equity.

This change would allow the Regional Resource Centers greater flexibility in recruiting Board members that are aligned with library and community initiatives such as an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

The proposed bill reflects adaptive regional libraries whose trustees' valued skill sets directly contribute to mission accomplishment and to the libraries' prominence in their region. Community-based membership allows regional libraries to recruit board members who can advance the regional library agenda--e.g., community leaders, attorneys, financial experts, fundraisers, and advocates. This broadens and elevates the regional library as an entity mindful of larger community issues--e.g., economic development, health, transportation, and public safety--versus looking internally to county library issues.

MSLA fully supports the passage of this bill.