



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