

DCDLSB0358Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Brandt Van Unen

Position: FAV

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: SB0358

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 - 1:00 pm

My name is Brandt Van Unen, and I am the library coordinator for the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 358, which will provide critical funding for the library and ensure we can effectively serve Maryland's D/deaf and hard-of-hearing community for years to come.

The Deaf Culture Digital Library is growing. We're experiencing increased usage by D/deaf and hard-of-hearing residents across the state. Our collections, services, programs, and resources are expanding, too. With these improvements come increased costs, which are projected to continue to rise. That's why it's important for the Deaf Culture Digital Library to receive the funding we need to serve Maryland's D/deaf and hard-of-hearing community best.

We are living in uncertain times, and historically marginalized groups are especially vulnerable. When these communities lack access to resources, they suffer, and society as a whole experiences the impact. The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library is becoming increasingly vital for the D/deaf community in Maryland and beyond. Without additional State funding, the library and the people we serve will suffer.

Where can Deaf individuals find support if there isn't a library designed to meet their needs? Without the library, where can hearing parents of Deaf babies turn to for reliable resources? Where can a young hearing teen find assistance to help pave the way for a career as an interpreter or a teacher? What about a Deaf adult who is down on their luck and looking for

information to help them get back on their feet? Or the hearing librarian looking for training the Deaf Culture Digital Library provides to serve D/deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons effectively?

As a Deaf individual, I have faced challenges in accessing opportunities both as a child and as an adult. Even today, I continue to struggle with my quality of life due to gaps in my education and general knowledge despite having earned two master's degrees. I wouldn't wish this feeling of inadequacy on anyone.

I want to share our commitment, as the DCDL staff, to providing access to resources. Our digital library website is designed to be of high quality and is updated monthly to celebrate contributions and raise awareness of holidays and historical events from a D/deaf perspective. Recently, we developed a statewide centralized calendar of ASL- and Deaf-friendly events to create opportunities for people to connect and promote inclusion. Additionally, we have improved accessibility for users with vision impairments by adding alt text. As a result of these efforts, website views and user numbers doubled in FY24 compared to FY22. I believe our work has positively influenced the quality of life for our customers and those around them.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the DCDL at every level of the D/deaf community and its allies. Without the increased State funding, the DCDL will struggle to serve as a bridge between the community and society, and in turn, everyone will suffer. The DCDL is a hidden cultural gem and a source of hope. We are gradually revealing it to the world for everyone to see, experience, and appreciate—especially those who are seeking to restore their optimism and believe in one another again.

Letter in support of SB358_Carrie_Willson.pdf

Uploaded by: Carrie Willson

Position: FAV



inspiring possibility + calvertlibrary.info

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

BILL:	SB 358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library- Funding and Budget Submission	DATE:	February 5, 2025
SUBJECT:	Funding	COMMITTEE:	Budget and Taxation
TESTIMONY FROM:	Carrie Willson, Executive Director, Calvert Library	POSITION:	Support

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

On behalf of the citizens of Calvert County, I respectfully request support of **Senate Bill 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library- Funding and Budget Submission**. Begun via legislation in FY15, Maryland’s State Library Agency has been tasked with coordinating the Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL). The mandate includes a coordinator, the establishment of a Friends organization and an Advisory Board, the creation of a web site and the delivery of staff training and purchasing and providing resources to the deaf and hard of hearing community in Maryland.

The MD State Library Agency (MSLA) has faithfully upheld the letter and spirit of the law and has significantly grown its public programs including American Sign Language instruction, technology and accessibility, author talks and a virtual Summer Reading program. MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL since FY15.

The DCDL web site serves more and more residents as a digital library resource center and demand for materials and services is also projected to continue to grow. I respectfully request that, even in this challenging budget year, the State Library Agency be granted funds to ensure that these valuable resources, serving Maryland’s deaf and hard of hearing community, be allocated the funding they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Carrie Willson
Executive Director, Calvert Library



SB358Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Newman

Position: FAV



Dana Newman
Director

100 West Dover Street
Easton, MD 21601

Telephone
410-822-1626
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Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission
February 3, 2025
Support

Dear Chair King and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission.**

The bill will provide necessary funding for DCDL above what the state library can provide. The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) is a unique and invaluable resource for the 1.2 million Maryland residents who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing. The DCDL is dedicated to providing leadership and guidance in offering resources about Deaf culture; acquiring and preserving an excellent collection of Deaf resources in digital formats; furnishing access to information regardless of location; providing highly competent assistance to Maryland residents and library staff in local public library systems, academic librarians in colleges and universities, and other libraries throughout Maryland. The law requires the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to fund a DCDL coordinator, maintain a website, purchase and provide resources, deliver staff training, offer programs, and establish both an Advisory Board and a Friends organization. Since the DCDL's inception in FY15, MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL personnel and other resources. DCDL expenses exceed the current budget allocation and are projected to increase.

The DCDL website, the core resource for the program, functions as a digital library, resource center, information hub and connector for other organizations and entities. The number of active DCDL website users and electronic materials available to customers have increased steadily in recent years, with website usage and demand for materials projected to grow in the years to come. Since embarking on public training and programming efforts in 2020, the DCDL has significantly grown its public programs, including American Sign Language (ASL) instruction, technology and accessibility, author talks, and a virtual Summer Reading and Learning program. Without additional funding, services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will suffer, whether through reductions in DCDL programs, staffing levels, planned website enhancements, its digital collection, or training for Maryland public library staff to adequately serve this population. In order to cover DCDL funding gaps and maintain a basic level of services moving forward, MSLA may be forced to reallocate funds from other programs, limiting the effectiveness of the agency throughout the state.

Thank you for your past support of MSLA which has so far funded DCDL. I ask that you favorably recommend SB358 for passage.

Sincerely,

Dana Newman
Library Director

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB358.pdf

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 5, 2025

Senate Bill 358

**Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 358 requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$450,000 to the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library; and requiring the Deaf Culture Digital Library to submit its annual operating budget to the State Library Agency on or before June 1 each year.

An annual budget is critical to enhancing the offerings of the Deaf Culture Digital Library and ensuring equitable access to literary resources for the deaf community. A robust digital platform that prioritizes accessibility can significantly improve inclusivity by providing tailored resources designed to meet the unique needs of deaf individuals. For educators and caregivers of deaf children, such resources are instrumental in effectively teaching literacy and fostering learning. Dedicating a portion of the budget to enhance these offerings in community libraries is essential to creating inclusive public spaces that serve diverse needs.

Strengthening the programs and services of the Deaf Culture Digital Library allows the provision of literature and resources that support the deaf community. Establishing an annual budget process is necessary to evaluate and address the fiscal requirements of these initiatives across the state, ensuring the library system can equitably serve the deaf community and promote broader access to educational and cultural resources.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **SB 358**.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB358 Maryland Deaf Cultural Digital Library-Fundi

Uploaded by: Janet Salazar

Position: FAV



Centreville Branch: 121 S. Commerce St., Centreville MD 21617
410.758.0980

Kent Island Branch: 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD 21666
410.643.8161

Senate Budget and Taxation
SB358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library – Funding and Budget Submission
February 5, 2025
Support/Favorable

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of SB358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library – Funding and Budget Submission.

There are 1.2 million Marylanders who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing. The Maryland Deaf Cultural Digital Library (DCDL) gathers resources for this community in one, easy-to-use website. Through the website, all Marylanders have access to resources that preserve the history of Deaf culture in the state. DCDL users also have access to resources to help them stay informed, educated, and entertained through the digital collection. The staff are available to help people find the information they need. The staff also train other staff in public libraries, academic libraries, and other libraries throughout the state about the resources that are available and how to use them with their own library customers.

In Fiscal Year 2015, a law was passed in the state that requires the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to fund a coordinator for DCDL, maintain a website, purchase and provide resources, deliver staff training, offer programs, and establish both an Advisory Board and Friends organization. MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL since that time. It will come as no surprise that the amount that was allocated in FY 2015 is no longer able to fully support the program ten years later. In FY 2025, the expected costs for the program are estimated to be \$365,000, a shortfall of \$131,000.

Use of the DCDL's resources has steadily grown in recent years and is projected to continue to grow in the future. In 2020, DCDL ramped up its public training and programs and these offerings continue to grow as well. They include American Sign Language instruction, technology and accessibility and the importance of these being available in public libraries for people of all abilities and a virtual Summer Reading and Learning program so that children affected by hearing disabilities will have access to same types of programs other children in the state do. Without additional funding, services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will suffer.

Queen Anne's County Library supports the passage of SB358. I respectfully ask for your support of this budget item, which will allow DCDL to continue to support Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community and specifically the Queen Anne's County Library users who depend on this service. By providing the proposed funding, MSLA will not be forced to reallocate funds from other programs to fund DCDL. The planned website enhancements, growing digital collection and increase in programs and training will continue, benefiting not only the 1.2 million Marylanders who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing, but all residents, educators, and business in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration,

Janet Salazar
Director

SB358 - Letter of Support_CaroCoPubLib_2_3_25.pdf

Uploaded by: Jonah Owens

Position: FAV



**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library
February 3, 2025
Support**

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

This letter is in support of SB358 Requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$450,000 to the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library; and requiring the Deaf Culture Digital Library to submit its annual operating budget to the State Library Agency on or before June 1 each year.

The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) is a unique and invaluable resource for the 1.2 million Maryland residents who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing. The DCDL website, the core resource for the program, functions as a digital library, resource center, information hub and connector for other organizations and entities. The number of active DCDL website users and electronic materials available to customers have increased steadily in recent years, with website usage and demand for materials projected to grow in the years to come. Since embarking on public training and programming efforts in 2020, the DCDL has significantly grown its public programs, including American Sign Language (ASL) instruction, technology and accessibility, author talks, and a virtual Summer Reading and Learning program.

Since the DCDL's inception in FY15, MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL personnel and other resources. DCDL expenses exceed the current budget allocation and are projected to increase. Without additional funding, services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will suffer, whether through reductions in DCDL programs, staffing levels, planned website enhancements, its digital collection, or training for Maryland public library staff to adequately serve this population. In order to cover DCDL funding gaps and maintain a basic level of services moving forward, MSLA may be forced to reallocate funds from other programs, limiting the effectiveness of the agency throughout the state.

I respectfully ask for your support of SB358 to help DCDL continue its important work throughout the State.

Sincerely,

Jonah Owens
Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

Central Library
100 Market Street
Denton, Maryland 21629
p 410.479.1343 f 410.479.1443

Federsburg Branch
123 Morris Avenue
Federsburg, Maryland 21632
p 410.754.8397 f 410.754.3058

North County Branch
101 Cedar Lane • P.O. Box 336
Greensboro, Maryland 21639
p 410.482.2173 f 410.482.2634

MacMillan_DCDL testimony_.pdf

Uploaded by: Kathleen MacMillan

Position: FAV

Kathy MacMillan-----
2317 Wineberry Terrace ~ Baltimore, MD 21209 ~ (443) 739-0716
kathymacmillan@gmail.com ~ KathyMacMillan.com

February 3, 2025

To: CHAIR OF EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

SB0358 - Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission

IN SUPPORT

My name is Kathleen MacMillan. I am writing today to urge you to enthusiastically support funding for Bill SB0358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library: Funding and Budget Submission.

I am a lifelong Maryland resident. I am hearing, but have been involved with the Deaf Community since 1999. For the last 25 years, I have been a counselor and director with Deaf Camps, Inc., a nonprofit organization that runs communication-rich camps for deaf and hard of hearing children, as well as children learning American Sign Language. I have been a nationally certified American Sign Language interpreter since 2006. I also hold a Master of Library Science from the University of Maryland, College Park, and worked in public and school libraries in Maryland, including the Maryland School for the Deaf, Columbia Campus, for 25 years. I am one of the few trainers in the nation who specializes in professional development for library staff focusing on better serving the Deaf Community, as well as the responsible use of American Sign Language in storytime programming. I maintain a detailed listing of resources for library staff nationwide on my website at KathyMacMillan.com, and I have taught 3 popular online courses on these topics with the American Library Association for many years. I am also the author of more than two dozen traditionally published books for children, teens, and adults, including the *Little Hands Signing* series from Familius Press, *Little Hands and Big Hands: Children and Adults Signing Together* (Hands Up Press), and *Try Your Hand at This!* (Scarecrow Press), a guide for library staff to better serve deaf patrons.

I was incredibly proud when Maryland became the first state to set up a Deaf Culture Digital Library, and I have seen firsthand how the Maryland DCDL has provided a model and an inspiration for other states to better serve their deaf patrons and to support library staff in doing so. As I travel around the state and its surrounding areas presenting storytimes that teach basic ASL, as well as professional development workshops, I have talked to many library staff members who have been able to better serve their D/deaf and hard of hearing patrons because of the resources provided by the DCDL, and to many D/deaf and hard of hearing people who have found access to resources through the DCDL for the first time.

The work of the DCDL is not just a nice thing; it is absolutely crucial for providing linguistic and cultural resources to this underserved population. Research shows that as many as 70% of D/deaf and hard of hearing children experience language deprivation due to a lack of accessible linguistic input, most prevalently among Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) families. Consequences of language deprivation include delays in cognitive and social-emotional development, limited educational development due to weak first-language skills that hinder learning written English as a second language, impacts on family relationships due to lack of communication, and lower self-esteem. (<https://www.nad.org/implications-of-language-deprivation-for-young-deaf-deafblind-deafdisabled-and-hard-of-hearing-children/>)

Even more alarming: the current administration has stated its desire to weaken both the Department of Justice and the Department of Education, both of which are critical to enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act. Weakening these entities may result in a de facto repeal of the ADA without any legislative decision. This would be devastating to the Deaf Community, as well as the disability community. It is more important than ever that the Maryland legislature shore up access and resources for these communities at the state level.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen MacMillan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathleen" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "MacMillan".

Kathleen MacMillan

SB 358 Letter of Support 2_3_25 (DCDL).pdf

Uploaded by: Lloyd Jansen

Position: FAV

Budget and Taxation Committee**SB 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Library - Funding and Budget Submission****February 3, 2025**

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your favorable support of **SB 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission**. This bill provides much needed funding for the Maryland Deaf Culture Library (DCDL), which serves the 1.2 million Maryland residents who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Usage of DCDL services, primarily through the DCDL website (<https://www.marylanddcdl.org/>), has steadily increased in recent years, and that demand is only expected to grow in coming years. As required by law, the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) supports much of the DCDL infrastructure, such as staff positions, website maintenance, purchasing resources, and offering programs. MSLA has directed \$235,000 per year toward the DCDL, but it is projected that in FY25 that level of funding will fall \$131,000 short of what is needed. The funding request of \$450,000 annually will ensure that the DCDL can continue to serve the Deaf community without resorting to devastating cuts to programs, its digital collections, or its staffing levels. In order to maintain a basic level of service, MSLA may be forced to divert funding for other programs and services to the DCDL, further harming residents across the state.

On behalf of the Charles County Public Library and the Deaf and hard-of-hearing residents of Charles County, I ask that you favorably recommend SB 358 for passage.

KennethWayne Thompson, Executive Director
Charles County Public Library

MDAD Letter Written Testimony SB 358.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: MDAD President MDAD President

Position: FAV



Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony
SB 358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library
Funding and Budget Submission
Wednesday, January 5, 2025
Position: Favorable

President

Tina Joyner

The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) is a statewide organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders, with a particular focus on accessibility and equality.

Vice President

Jacob Leffler

MDAD strongly supports SB 358, sponsored by Senator King, as it directly addresses a critical need for our community—the continued growth and accessibility of the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL). Established through years of advocacy, the DCDL has become an essential resource, ensuring that our community has access to vital information that is otherwise scarce or inaccessible.

Secretary

Tiasha Bera

The DCDL has consistently provided high-quality content, updating its website monthly to celebrate Deaf culture, raise awareness of significant historical events, and highlight important holidays from a Deaf perspective. The library’s centralized calendar of ASL- and Deaf-friendly events has become a cornerstone for community engagement, fostering inclusion and creating essential opportunities for connection. Additionally, by improving accessibility features such as alt text for DeafBlind users, the DCDL has proven its commitment to ensuring that no one in our community is left behind.

Treasurer

Allysa Dittmar

However, the work is not finished. The funding proposed by SB 358 will enable the DCDL to expand these vital services and increase accessibility, ensuring even more resources are available to those who need them. This bill will not only continue to serve our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing population but will also create new opportunities for those seeking to learn American Sign Language (ASL), further strengthening our community and its capacity for growth.

Board Members

Meredith DeSomma

Vikki Porter

Blaise Delahoussaye

Philip Mecham

Thelma Schroeder

We urge you to recognize the profound impact of this legislation and support SB 358, ensuring that the DCDL can continue to thrive and expand its mission. A favorable outcome is essential for the future of our community, and we stand firm in our commitment to seeing this critical resource succeed.

We look forward to a favorable outcome to SB 358.

MDAD Board of Directors

SB 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (2025)

Uploaded by: Megan Sutherland

Position: FAV



Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission

Budget and Taxation Committee

February 5, 2025

SUPPORT

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

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) strongly supports **SB 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission**. The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) is a unique and invaluable resource for the 1.2 million Maryland residents identifying as Deaf or hard-of-hearing. The DCDL is dedicated to providing leadership and guidance in offering resources about Deaf culture, acquiring and preserving an excellent collection of Deaf resources in digital formats, furnishing access to information regardless of location, and providing highly competent assistance to Maryland residents and library staff in public and academic libraries in colleges and universities throughout the state.

The law requires the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to fund a DCDL coordinator, maintain a website, purchase and provide resources, deliver staff training, offer programs, and establish both an Advisory Board and a Friends organization. For the past decade, since DCDL's inception, MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL personnel and other resources. DCDL expenses exceed the current budget allocation and are projected to increase. The DCDL website, the core resource for the program, functions as a digital library, resource center, information hub, and connector for other organizations and entities. The number of active DCDL website users and electronic materials available to customers has increased steadily in recent years, with website usage and demand for materials projected to grow in the years to come.

Without additional funding, services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will suffer, whether through reductions in DCDL programs, staffing levels, planned website enhancements, its digital collection, or training for Maryland public library staff to adequately serve this population. In order to cover DCDL funding gaps and maintain a basic level of services moving forward, MSLA may be forced to reallocate funds from other programs, limiting the effectiveness of the agency throughout the state.

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System is deeply committed to ensuring access to information for all community members. We rely on expert partners like the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library to meet that commitment to our Deaf and hard-of-hearing residents. We ask that you **favorably recommend SB 358** for passage.

Sincerely,

Mark Winston, Ph. D. CEO

SB 358 - Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - F

Uploaded by: Morgan Miller

Position: FAV



BILL: SB 358 **DATE:** 2/5/2025
SUBJECT: Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission **COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation
SPEAKER: Morgan Miller, State Librarian **POSITION:** Favorable

EXPLANATION

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is in support of SB 358 and encourages a favorable review.

More than 1.2 million Maryland residents identify as being Deaf or hard-of-hearing, and this number is expected to increase as the population ages. The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) serves the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community throughout Maryland and is the first of its kind. Usage of the DCDL has grown steadily in recent years as the library hosts one of the largest collections of books and resources related to Deaf Culture in the United States. This includes American Sign Language (ASL) materials, works by Deaf authors, resources from numerous Deaf, hard-of-hearing and allied organizations, and information about age-related hearing loss, among other resources.

The services and impact of the DCDL support many of the Moore-Miller Administration's priorities, including 1) Setting students up for success; 2) Creating an equitable, robust, and competitive economy; 3) Connecting Marylanders to jobs; and 4) Advancing infrastructure to better connect all Marylanders to opportunities and each other.

The DCDL website (<https://www.marylandcdl.org/>) is the core resource for the program. It functions as a digital library, resource center, and information hub and connector for other organizations and entities, including the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Maryland Association for the Deaf. The number of active website users has increased by 78% since 2022 and is estimated to grow to 21,000 over the course of the next year. Electronic materials (ebooks and audiobooks) totaled 1,203 in FY24, a 53% increase since FY22, and the demand for additional materials grows daily.

Public training and programming is another primary focus area. Since embarking on these efforts in 2020, the DCDL has grown to serve approximately 750 participants a year through its public programs. Programs focus on ASL instruction, technology and accessibility, author talks, and a

virtual Summer Reading and Learning program. These programs not only bring awareness to Deaf culture, they also directly serve the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Plans for increased resource and programming development, including the addition of more digital titles and an online catalog of Deaf digital creators and influencers, are underway but are limited due to funding constraints.

As part of DBM’s analysis of MSLA’s operating budget, the Agency was asked to comment on the need for additional funds, including an explanation of why the initial fiscal 2025 appropriation was insufficient, how the additional funds will be used, and whether this reflects ongoing funding needs for the program.

Since the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library’s inception in FY 2015, MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support personnel and other resources. This funding level initially was adequate to support the DCDL. However, due to the requirements for specialized personnel and planned increases in staff salaries that are tied to the union contract that staff have with host Montgomery County, DCDL expenses exceed the current budget allocation. Furthermore, funds needed to support the DCDL’s increasing resource usage, expanded services and programming demands are extremely limited. Projected funding needs for the program for FY2023-27 are as follows:

	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026 (Projected)	FY 2027 (Projected)
Salaries/Benefits	148,015	246,178	270,797	297,877	327,665
Contracted Services	42,765	35,186	46,022	48,669	54,154
Supplies	23,522	15,000	15,000	18,000	20,000
Other (indirect costs)	20,698	29,636	33,181	36,454	40,181
Percent increase from previous year	XXX	38.7%	11.9%	10%	10%

TOTAL	235,000	326,000	365,000	401,000	442,000
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If fully supported through a reliable funding source, the DCDL will be able to: Continue to enhance its digital platform by offering additional resources and titles; Better provide resources to school-age children, including access interpretation services and building virtual and in-person networks for Deaf and hard-of-hearing children to improve their social-emotional well-being; Increase public programming and partnerships; Support workforce development by working with partners to expand services to connect members of the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community to job opportunities, networking events, job training, and entrepreneurship to close the employment gap; participate in regional and statewide workgroups to ensure that issues for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals are prioritized.

Without additional funding, library services to members of the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will suffer, from limited resource availability to reduced personnel. In order to cover DCDL funding gaps and maintain a basic level of services, MSLA may be forced to reallocate funds from other programs (primarily grants to county public library systems), limiting the effectiveness of the agency throughout the state. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration.

MSLA supports the passage of this bill.

CCPL_Testimony_DCDL Funding_SB 358_2.3.25.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Wright

Position: FAV

BILL:	SB 358	DATE:	February 3, 2025
SUBJECT:	Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) Funding and Budget Submission	COMMITTEE:	Budget and Taxation
TESTIMONY FROM:	Rachel Wright, Executive Director, Cecil County Public Library	POSITION:	Support

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Committee Members:

Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) fully supports **SB 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) Funding and Budget Submission**.

Fully funding the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) is critical in ensuring the 1.2 million Marylanders who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing have access to the unique and invaluable resources provided by DCDL.

MD law requires the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to fund a DCDL coordinator, maintain a website, purchase and provide resources, deliver staff training, offer programs, and to establish an Advisory Board and a Friends organization to meet the specialized information needs of the Deaf or hard-of-hearing community.

As community need increases, so to have the costs of providing these essential services. Since FY15, MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL personnel and other resources. Considering all that DCDL does and provides to the Deaf or hard-of-hearing community, it is no surprise that their current expenses exceed the current budget allocation and that these costs are projected to increase. Additional funding is needed to ensure DCDL continues to provide the essential services this community relies on daily. MSLA is proposing an annual funding bill of \$450,000 to ensure these Marylanders are not left behind.

Access to vital information and resources in accessible formats is a value held by every library. Without additional funding, the services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will undoubtedly suffer – whether through the reduction of programs, staffing, and collections, or of the critical training required to ensure the Deaf or hard-of-hearing community is adequately served. Additionally, inadequate funding may impact the entirety of the MD community, as MSLA could be forced to reallocate funds from other essential programs to make up for any gaps in DCDL funding.

Therefore, we respectfully request your full support of **SB 358 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) Funding and Budget Submission**.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Maryland libraries and communities.

Truly,



Rachel Wright
Executive Director, Cecil County Public Library
485 Mauldin Avenue
North East, MD 21901

SB358-King-Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FAV

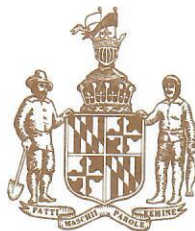
NANCY J. KING
Legislative District 39
Montgomery County

Majority Leader

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair

Education, Business and
Administration Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library –
Funding and Budget Submission**

February 5, 2025

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) serves Deaf and hard-of-hearing Marylanders across the state and has a mission that, “All customers shall have equitable access to Deaf culture information through the Deaf Culture Digital Library in a centralized medium in the state of Maryland.” The DCDL is dedicated to providing leadership and guidance in:

- offering resources about Deaf culture;
- acquiring and preserving an excellent collection of Deaf resources in digital formats;
- furnishing access to information regardless of location;
- providing highly competent assistance to Maryland residents and library staff in local public library systems, academic librarians in colleges and universities, and other libraries throughout Maryland.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is required by law to fund DCDL from MSLA's Operating Budget, but no additional funding has been provided to meet rising operational costs, which now exceed their current funding. With over 1.2 million Maryland residents identifying as Deaf or hard of hearing, projections show DCDL's operating costs will continue to rise in the coming years.

The Governor's Office and Department of Budget and Management recognized the need for additional funding and supported MSLA's deficiency request for FY26, but the DCDL is still in need of a long-term funding solution. Senate Bill 358 will require the DCDL to submit its annual operating budget to the State Library Agency on or before June 1 each year and will appropriate \$450,000 annually to the DCDL.

Without this funding, there will be a direct, negative impact on Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 358.

SB358 Howard.pdf

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Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM

Learn. Grow. Connect.

Testimony in support of SB 358: Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding
Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 3, 2025
Submitted by Tonya Aikens, Howard County Library System President & CEO

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

I am writing to express support for **SB 358: Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding**.

The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) is a unique and invaluable resource for the 1.2 million Maryland residents who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing. The DCDL provides leadership and guidance in offering resources about Deaf culture; acquiring and preserving a collection of Deaf resources in digital formats; providing access to information regardless of location; providing highly competent assistance to Maryland residents and library staff in local public library systems, academic librarians in colleges and universities, and other libraries throughout Maryland.

State law requires the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to fund a DCDL coordinator, maintain a website, purchase and provide resources, deliver staff training, offer programs, and establish both an Advisory Board and a Friends organization.

Since the DCDL's inception in FY15, MSLA has allocated \$235,000 in general funds to support DCDL personnel and other resources. For FY25, DCDL costs are expected to be \$365,000, representing a \$131,000 shortage. By FY27, the program's funding needs are projected to be \$442,000. The proposed annual funding bill is for \$450,000.

The DCDL website, the core resource for the program, functions as a digital library, resource center, information hub and connector for other organizations and entities. The number of active DCDL website users and electronic materials available to customers have increased steadily in recent years, with website usage and demand for materials projected to grow in the years to come.

Since embarking on public training and programming efforts in 2020, the DCDL has significantly grown its public programs, including American Sign Language (ASL) instruction, technology and accessibility, author talks, and a virtual Summer Reading and Learning program.

Without additional funding, services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will suffer, whether through reductions in DCDL programs, staffing levels, planned website enhancements, its digital collection, or training for Maryland public library staff to adequately serve this population.

In order to cover DCDL funding gaps and maintain a basic level of services moving forward, MSLA may be forced to reallocate funds from other programs, limiting the effectiveness of the agency throughout the state.

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Thank you for your support of Maryland's Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. We ask that you **favorably recommend SB 358** for passage.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens,
President & CEO