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MAYOR

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HB 0660

March 10, 2026

TO: Members of the House Appropriations Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of the Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 660 -Public Libraries - State Library Resource Center - Funding
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 660.

HB 660 would provide a slight increase in funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) for FY2028-FY2032. This increase would allow SLRC to continue to help libraries across the state to offer services and resources that the community needs.

Maryland has a unique model in that we do not have an independent state library. While each jurisdiction has its own local library system, the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central branch serves as the SLRC for Maryland. The ability to share materials and resources statewide is a critical component of ensuring that each resident across the state can have equal access to knowledge and information regardless of whether their local library system has that material on file.

Through its role as the SLRC, in 2025 alone, students from kindergarten through the 12th grade used the Enoch Pratt's online databases 1.5 million times, residents contacted library staff for references 267,704 times and people accessed government documents available via the library over 9,000 times.

While there is a mandatory level of funding provided for SLRC services, that funding has not been sufficient over time due to costs outpacing the mandated levels. Last fiscal year, the Enoch Pratt Free Library had to transfer nearly \$1.8 million from its general fund to maintain some of these essential services. The BCA and Enoch Pratt Free Library are proud to continue to provide services to residents of Baltimore City and statewide, however, the BCA has concerns about the long-term fiscal health of the SLRC without adjusting funding levels.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 660.