



March 6, 2026

**RE: House Bill 660 – Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center – Funding  
Position: Favorable**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committees:

I write in support of House Bill 660 and respectfully request a favorable report.

In Wicomico County, the State Library Resource Center makes a real difference. It allows us to provide services and resources that would otherwise be out of reach for our residents.

Through SLRC's statewide consortium, Maryland saves nearly \$4 million on electronic resources that would otherwise cost libraries and schools \$4.6 million to purchase individually. For a county library like ours, that means access to high-quality databases and research tools we could not afford on our own.

In FY2025 alone, SLRC answered 267,704 reference questions, lent nearly 300,000 items statewide through interlibrary loan, and supported 1.5 million student database uses. Our residents benefit directly from that scale. When a Wicomico patron needs specialized materials, SLRC delivers. When a student needs reliable research tools, SLRC provides them.

But the system is under strain. SLRC has cut its print budget and restricted key services due to funding shortages. The Enoch Pratt Free Library has backfilled \$1.79 million from its own general fund to keep statewide services intact, and that cannot continue.

House Bill 660 offers a disciplined, modest adjustment beginning in FY2028. It moves the per capita rate from \$2.07 to \$2.17, roughly a 5 percent increase. This protects a statewide system that allows counties like Wicomico to deliver quality service.

This bill strengthens Maryland's library infrastructure. It protects equity across counties. It safeguards access for our residents.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 660.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seth Hershberger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Seth Hershberger, Director  
Wicomico Public Library