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ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor



YAAKOV "JAKE" WEISSMANN
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

TITLE: HB660 Public Libraries - State Library Resource Center - Funding

DATE: March 10, 2026

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: Letter of Concern

SUMMARY OF BILL: HB 660 amends Maryland Education law to change how the State Library Resource Center (Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore) is funded. Instead of the current law's flat rate of \$2.07 per State resident held indefinitely, the bill creates a new escalating schedule:

- FY2025–2027: \$2.07/resident
- FY2028: \$2.17
- FY2029: \$2.28
- FY2030: \$2.39
- FY2031: \$2.51
- FY2032 and beyond: \$2.64

EXPLANATION: While public library services are undeniably valuable, embedding a mandatory escalating funding schedule directly into statute removes future budget flexibility. Each \$0.10 per-resident increase costs Maryland approximately \$610,000 annually based on current population. The full escalation from \$2.07 to \$2.64 adds roughly \$3.5 million per year in mandatory spending by FY2032 with no ability to pause or adjust during difficult budget years.

Given forecasted out-year deficits and significant uncertainty about the federal budget and policy changes, it would be challenging for the State to manage this increase in spending. This challenge is compounded by major, unforeseen changes in federal policy and other ongoing budgetary pressures. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) now forecasts significant shortfalls beginning in Fiscal Year 2027 and escalating into Fiscal Year 2028.

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