

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 155 (Senator Della)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

---

**Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City - Number of Branches**

---

This bill requires Baltimore City to maintain one central library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and at least 21 branch libraries located throughout Baltimore City.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Potential increase in Baltimore City expenditures due to the requirement that the Enoch Pratt Free Library maintain at least 21 library branches throughout the city. This bill imposes a mandate on the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The governance structure of the library and the powers and duties of the board of trustees are established in Chapter 181 of 1882. It is a private nonprofit entity. There is no current provision that requires the library to maintain at least 21 library branches.

**Background:** The Enoch Pratt Free Library serves as the public library system in Baltimore City and as the State Library Resource Center. It was established in 1882 through a donation from Enoch Pratt who insisted that the library serve all city residents, “rich and poor without distinction of race or color.” The Enoch Pratt Free Library is administered by a private self-perpetuating board of trustees.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library was designated the State Library Resource Center by the General Assembly in 1971. This designation and accompanying State support allow all Maryland citizens to have access to the public library system. Acting in place of the state library that exists in most states, the State Library Resource Center works cooperatively with other libraries in a network that allows materials and information to be shared statewide.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City has one central library and 21 branches. The budget for the Enoch Pratt Free Library totals \$27.1 million in fiscal 2002 and \$28.5 million in fiscal 2003. Most of the increase in funding for the library came from the State. **Exhibit 1** shows the revenue sources for the library.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Funding for the Enoch Pratt Free Library**

<u>Source</u>	<u>FY 2002</u>	<u>FY 2003</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Baltimore City	\$12.8 million	\$12.8 million	\$0
State Funding			
Minimum Program	5.2 million	5.5 million	0.3 million
Resource Center Grant	8.1 million	9.1 million	1.0 million
Detention Center Grant	0.1 million	0.1 million	0
Special Funds	0.9 million	1.0 million	0.1 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27.1 million</b>	<b>\$28.5 million</b>	<b>\$1.4 million</b>

Due to funding difficulties in recent years, the library system has closed several branches. In 1997, the St. Paul and the Morrell Park branches were closed. In 2001, five branches at Dundalk, Fells Point, Gardenville, Hollins-Payson, and Pimlico were closed. This bill would prohibit the board of trustees or Baltimore City from reducing the number of library branches in the city.

Library officials advise that the direct costs to operate a small branch, such as the Canton branch, totals \$250,000 to \$300,000. A larger branch, such as the Hamilton branch, costs \$600,000 to \$700,000 to operate. These direct costs include staff salaries, books, materials, utilities, and maintenance. Most library branches operate under a five-day single shift, whereby extended hours cannot be provided. In order for a library branch to be opened on Saturday, the branch would have to be closed on a weekday. To provide

the current level of services to city residents, library officials have discussed the possibility of closing additional branches. Pursuant to this legislation, the library would not be able to implement any additional branch closings.

---

### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SB 840 introduced at the 2002 session included a provision that required the Enoch Pratt Free Library to have at least 21 library branches. The bill received an unfavorable report by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 14, 2003  
ncs/jr

---

Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch Jr.

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510