



SOMERSET
COUNTY LIBRARY

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Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Ed Goyda

Dear Chairman Pinsky. Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

The Somerset County Library has had fine-free student cards since the 2018-2019 school year and has been fine-free for all users since August of 2019. This bill would aid in restoring funding lost during these reductions in fine receipts. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of the Somerset Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Crisfield Princess Anne Erwell

11767 Beechwood Street, Princess Anne, MD 21853

phone: 410.651.0852

fax: 410.651.1388

www.somelibrary.org

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the Crisfield Library would not have been able to be constructed. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

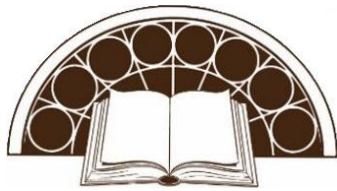
Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Ed Goyda

Director, Somerset County Library



DORCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

303 Gay Street
Cambridge MD 21613
(410) 228-7331

222 S. Main Street
Hurlock MD 21643
(410) 943-4331

Crystal Henningsen, Director • crystalh@dorchesterlibrary.org

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Crystal Henningsen

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of Dorchester County Public Library's Board of Library Trustees, the Dorchester County Public Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since January 1, 2020. This bill would aid in restoring diminished revenue previously gained through patron fines. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of the Dorchester County Public Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access. As expected based on national research, we have not seen our return rates decrease significantly. Instead, our good will in the community has increased and former patrons are once again returning to the library. Rather than compromise access to available materials, the removal of fines has increased the provision of quality services for the entire community.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Please consider leaving policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the Dorchester County Public Library would not be embarking on a building program to

replace the Hurlock Branch Library. We are thrilled to be planning an 8,500 SF facility to replace the current library which is less than 4,000 SF and wholly inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,
Crystal Henningsen
Director, Dorchester County Public Library



ENOCH PRATT
free LIBRARY

Office of the CEO

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020

Dear Chairman Pinsky. Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

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Thanks to the support of the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Board of Library Trustees and Baltimore City Government, the Enoch Pratt Free Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since June of 2018. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

The amendments we are requesting would leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. They would leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding which the Enoch Pratt Free Library has used to address its aging building infrastructure. We are utilizing \$1.0 million in State support matched by more than \$2.0 million in City and private gifts to renovate the Hampden library which is more than 100 years old. It will be completely modernized and for the first time in its history, have community meeting room and program space. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center** (SLRC) is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



Heidi Daniel

Chief Executive Officer, Enoch Pratt Free Library



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by: Paula Miller, Director, Baltimore County Public Library

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 “Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act”.

All three parts of this bill are a wise investment in public libraries and the communities they serve.

- 1) **Public Library Capital Grant Program:** Our Library Board of Trustees is excited to see the proposal for the capital funds increase from \$5 million annually to \$7.5 million annually. Many of our libraries across the state are dealing with aging infrastructure as well as community requests for buildings that are in better condition and that meet the needs of today’s users. BCPL could not have done most of our recent building renovation projects without the assistance of state capital funds. We have been approved for grants totaling \$4.4M in assistance for capital projects over the last decade, including renovations for our Randallstown, Reisterstown, and Catonsville branches as well as a new branch in Sollers Point.
- 2) **State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Funding:** The State Library Resource Center (SLRC), housed and operated by the Enoch Pratt Free Library, provides critical resources, programs, and training to all libraries across the state. Extending the scheduled increases to the per capita funding necessary to maintain those services strengthens collaboration, consistency, and communication across the entire Maryland library network. Services provided by SLRC equalize opportunities and access and provide an important equity component for library service to all residents of Maryland.
- 3) **Fine-Free for Kids:** Fine-free for kids represents a tremendous opportunity to equalize access to books and learning materials for children using our public libraries. It will also put Maryland on the national library landscape: “The Free State Goes Fine-Free for Kids”. The fine-free movement in libraries arose from a greater awareness of the obstacle that fines present to kids whose families cannot afford to pay their fines and then are blocked from access. Not surprisingly, these also tend to be the children whose families cannot afford to buy books. Children in those families then lose the opportunity to have books in the home, to be exposed to more reading by both adults and other family members, and to develop a larger vocabulary at an early age through exposure to words and books. Especially in the early years, this can be very detrimental to the development and progression of a child’s reading skills, and, as research has shown, ultimately to the child’s success in school and life. Fine-free reinforces values that libraries hold dear – equity of access to educational support materials, inclusion, the right of every kid to enjoy the value and pleasure of reading, and an understanding of libraries as gracious space and as an instrument of democracy.



BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

My single concern is that language in the bill should be revised to allow for flexibility in its application by the individual counties. Local Library Boards were created and authorized in state law, and much of their work is in planning and setting policies. Language on the mechanics of how this will work within each individual library system (determining any exceptions like in-demand items; determining when/how to wipe out previous fines; determining when to bill for items not returned or when/how to issue a refund) should be flexible and acknowledge the role of the local Library Board, making it easier and quicker for each County, each Library Board, and each library administration and staff to implement fine-free for their system.

Finally, I appreciate the assistance of state funding to cover the costs of implementing a fine-free policy. Baltimore County Public Library's Board has taken significant steps in this direction, but we have not fully implemented fine-free on all children's materials. While the proposed increase will not fully cover the cost of implementing fine-free at BCPL, we are committed to the philosophy of children being able to read and learn equitably. The additional state funds are immensely appreciated, and, in discussion with the County, we expect to find a way to cover the remainder of lost revenue from children's fines.

Baltimore County Public Library is happy to support this innovative bill, with amendments that provide local control around the complicated issues involved in implementation. All three parts of SB 524 are important to the ongoing high-quality library service that public libraries provide here in Maryland. Thank you for your previous, and, support to help libraries continue to serve their communities' most pressing needs.

Paula J. Miller

Paula J. Miller
Director, Baltimore County Public Library

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted by Roberta Phillips

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of *Prince George's County Memorial Library Board of Library Trustees and Prince George's County Government*, Prince George's County Memorial Library System ***will be fine-free*** (for all users) ***starting July 1, 2020***. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by Prince George's County's general fund. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of Prince George's Memorial Library System are very pleased to be removing this barrier to access for all community members.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program is an invaluable source of funding which allowed for several building renovations for Prince George's County Memorial Library System including Beltsville, Greenbelt, Spaulding, and Bowie. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching

Extending funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
MEMORIAL LIBRARY SYSTEM
www.pgcmlls.info

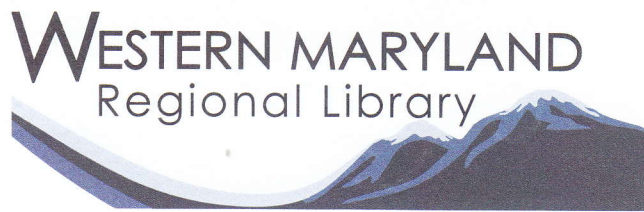
Roberta R. Phillips, CEO
9601 Capital Lane • Largo, MD 20774
(301) 699-3500 • TTY (301) 808-2061

access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thanks you for your continued support of Maryland Libraries.

Warm regards,

Roberta R. Phillips
Chief Executive Officer
Prince George's County Memorial Library System



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

The amendments offered attempt to preserve local control, and I urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems and their Boards of Trustees. Use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines, but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users, and their families.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program is an invaluable source of funding without which the library systems in Washington and Allegany counties would not have been able to construct new and renovated libraries in Hagerstown, Hancock, and South Cumberland. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students, and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Hulett", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth Hulett

Director

Western Maryland Regional Library



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524,
Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted by John Taube

Dear Chair and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

While we support the intent of this bill to reduce the financial barriers for children to use the public library, "the devil is in the details." The increase in per-capita funding will make it possible to go fine free for children in Allegany County. I strongly urge the committee to leave the procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems.

Allegany County Libraries have been fortunate to have a capable and committed Board of Trustees who make policy decisions based on the local conditions and needs of our community. We urge the committee to allow the local Boards to do the work they were appointed to. SB524 as it is currently written is a powerful statement of support for public libraries in Maryland, but the mandates regarding reminders and billing notices, how and when to issue refunds should remain local decisions.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program has been crucial to Allegany County's ability to maintain and renovate library facilities. We have benefitted from the grant funds to renovate our South Cumberland Library and replace the roof at our Westernport Library. These renovations would not have been possible without the Public Library Capital Grants Program as it was the key to making it affordable for Allegany County.

Public libraries across the state and the nation are making headlines as usage surges due to our many resources that help job seekers find work and learn new skills. Our facilities and services are also seeing higher volume of usage due our ability to help families stretch their home budgets. Therefore, every capital dollar for this program is vital to our ability to maintain and upgrade our facilities and offer fundamental services to our communities.

Since its founding in 1971, the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) has provided and expanded access to library materials and services that are unattainable in rural Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our K-12 students use daily, to the public and staff training, SLRC is invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



John E. Taube
Executive Director

C: Senator George Edwards

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

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted by Carrie Willson

Dear Chairman Pinsky. Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of Calvert Library's Board of Library Trustees and Calvert County Government, Calvert Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since March of 2019. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by Calvert County's general fund. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of Calvert Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which Calvert Library would not be embarking on a building program to replace Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch. We are thrilled to be planning a 16,000 SF facility to



replace the current library which is less than 5,000 SF and wholly inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carrie Willson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Carrie Willson

Executive Director, Calvert Library



February 10, 2020

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Debby Bennett

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, increase the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extend increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

The Board of Library Trustees for Caroline County voted for the Library to go **fine-free** (for all users) last summer. The amendments for this bill offer the ability to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of Caroline County Public Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access. As expected based on national research; we did not see our return rates decrease significantly, our good will in the community has increased, and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees, and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users, and their families.

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

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

Feddersburg Branch
123 Morris Avenue
Feddersburg, 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

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the Caroline County Public Library would not have made improvements to its Federalburg Branch, repaired a flat roof at the Central Library in Denton, and create a teen area at the Central Library. If we are able to receive state capital grant funds in the next few years, we will be able to embark on a much needed, sizable renovation of our Central Library in Denton; which will include a new family bathroom near our children's rooms, improved lighting, and improved quiet areas for people to spend some time at the library reading, studying, or working on a computer or device. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

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Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debby Bennett". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Debby Bennett
Executive Director

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Andrea Berstler

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Carroll County Public Library's Board of Library Trustees has demonstrated support for CCPL to move towards a fine free model for all users. This bill would provide financial funding to reduce the impact on the library's operating budget. The amendments offered will preserve the local control necessary to allow each public library to be responsive in offering services necessary to the needs of the community it serves in a manner consistent with the culture of that community. The trustees and staff of Carroll County Public Library would like to remove as many barriers to library service as possible. Based on national research, we believe that the use of the library and our good will in the community will increase, and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing will not be compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which Calvert Library would not be embarking on a building program to replace Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch. We are thrilled to be planning a 14,000 SF collaborative learning center which will offer a high-tech makerspace, a professional teaching kitchen and a set of community rooms in our Westminster Branch Library.

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee
February 12, 2020
Page 2

The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center, which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrea Berstler
Executive Director, Carroll County Public Library
President, Maryland Library Association

**Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee**

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Morgan Miller, Director of the Cecil County Public Library

I am writing to support, with amendments, **SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act**. The bill provides comprehensive state support to public libraries through a variety of measures that ensure access to life-changing library services and spaces for all Marylanders. More specifically, it is intended to empower public libraries fully establish fine-free materials borrowing for children and teens by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the state library capital construction grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and it extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Like many public library systems throughout the state, the Cecil County Public Library system has initiated fine-free borrowing programs that have expanded access to our valuable learning resources for children and youth, such as our Student Virtual Library Card partnership with the Cecil County Public Schools and our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program. While fines and fees have represented a traditional source of operating revenue for libraries for many decades, we recognize that they also create barriers for many of our most vulnerable citizens, essentially undermining our missions. SB 524, through an additional \$0.40 per capita increase in FY22, will help CCPL as well as other library systems throughout the state to become fully fine-free for children in the near future, making Maryland's public libraries the first in the nation to take such a powerful and influential step.

In relation to carrying out this legislation on a procedural level, I strongly urge this committee to remove procedural details from this bill and defer implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems and their governing Boards of Library Trustees, whose powers and duties encompass operational matters and are outlined in the Maryland Education Article. These Boards, their Directors, and their staff, are most knowledgeable of their local communities, as well as their unique funding mechanisms and operating standards.

As the director of a public library system that has been awarded more \$4.25 million in construction funds through **Maryland Library Capital Grant Program**, I can attest to the success of this legislation over the past 10 years, as well as its need for expansion. This program has helped the Cecil County Public Library system leverage millions of dollars in local funding to renovate multiple libraries, perform energy efficiency upgrades, install a solar powered canopy with electric charging stations at our main library, and construct our first new library in more than a decade- the new North East Branch Library, which will open to the public this time next year. Support for this project has been so strong that our county's state legislative leaders pursued and were awarded a local matching bond to aid in the construction of an early learning center in the new library. Since this critical state program was created in 2008, it has leveraged more than \$350,000,000 in state construction dollars at the local level and ensured that our library buildings remain vibrant, sustainable, and highly responsive to our communities who rely on them. Yet during this time, the program has seen no funding increase despite the increase in library construction projects throughout the

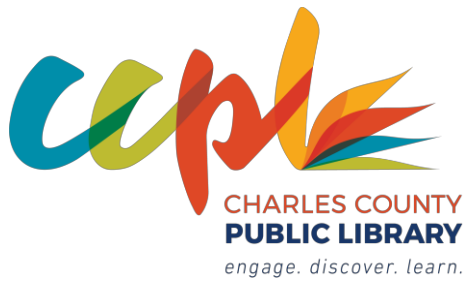


**Award Winner
National Medal**

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state as well annual escalations in construction costs. SB524 is an important first measure toward better aligning this grant program with the library construction funding needs of all Maryland counties.

I also serve on the Oversight Commission for the **State Library Resource Center** and ask for your support of its per capita funding increase as outlined in this bill. An investment in SLRC is magnified not only across Maryland's public libraries, but its school and academic libraries as well. From statewide internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users.



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries -- Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted Lloyd Jansen

Dear Chairman Pinsky. Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

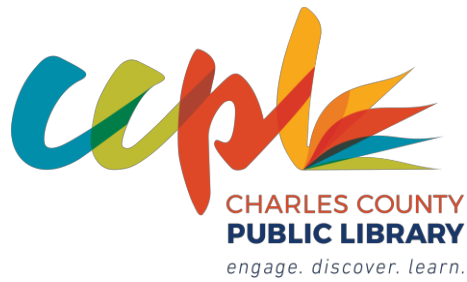
This letter is in support of, with amendments, SB524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. This bill accomplishes three important and powerful things for public libraries: 1) by adding \$0.40 per capita in FY22 it enables libraries across the state to be **fine free for children**; 2) it extends increases of per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC), which provides vital training and resources for libraries across the state; and 3) it increases funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5, funding that is of special importance to the La Plata community in Charles County, who hopes to see a new state-of-the-art library open in the next few years.

With the support of our Board of Trustees, the Charles County Public Library has been able to provide children's picture books and early readers fine-free since 2018. We also provide customers under 18 with special Kids Cards, which have no fines associated with them, but do have check out limitations. These changes have had a positive impact on our community, and are reducing barriers to getting books into the hands of kids.

The amendments attached to SB524 simple ensure that procedural matters regarding when and how to bill for lost materials stay under the local control of individual library systems and their Board of Trustees. Providing resources to allow all libraries statewide to be fine free for children is a powerful statement of the values the state legislature holds. Maintaining local control for the procedural details on how to implement the change to fine free for children will allow this important step to be implemented quickly and efficiently.

As someone who spent 18 years as a librarian in California, I can say from experience that the statewide support provided by the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) is a valuable resource unknown to librarians on the West Coast. As an example, staff from SLRC trained Charles County Public Library staff on how to identify and evaluated web sites for Fake News. Library staff in turn gave Fake News presentations to scores of high school students in our local community. Extending the increases in funding for SLRC will make it possible for us to continue to have highly skilled staff, and provide enhanced programming for our residents.

Libraries across the state are in need of repair and replacement. None more so than the La Plata Library. Opened in 1966, the La Plata Library has many challenges in serving a fast growing



community. Not least of which is the fact building is not ADA compliant. There is no public elevator, yet the public bathrooms are on the building's lower level from the main floor of the library. We hope to build a new library building over the next few years, but such a project would be impossible without some of the funding coming from the Capital Grants Program. Increasing funding for this program from \$5 to \$7 million would help to ensure that desperately needed programs are completed to better serve the state's residents.

Thank you for your continued support for libraries throughout the state.

Yours truly,

Lloyd Jansen
Acting Deputy Director
Charles County Public Library

Eastern Shore REGIONAL LIBRARY

31901 Tri-County Way Suite 116-B Salisbury, MD 21801 ph: 410-742-1537 fax: 410-548-5807

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by John Venditta, Administrator, Eastern Shore Regional Library

Dear Chairman Pinsky. Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Over the last year, four of the eight county library systems supported by the Eastern Shore Regional Library converted to fine-free for all users. The other four systems are in various stages of the conversion to fine-free. ESRL applauds the foresight shown by the Boards of all eight of these library systems as well as all of the systems in Maryland that view fines as an impediment to access. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by the county governments of these institutions. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that makes going fine-free possible. As expected based on national research, the fine-free systems on the Eastern Shore have not seen return rates decrease significantly and their level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

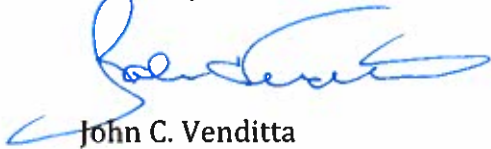
Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program is an invaluable source of funding without which the public libraries on the Eastern Shore would not be able to replace libraries which are wholly inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet

the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



John C. Venditta
Administrator, Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc.



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Tonya Aikens, HCLS President & CEO

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, *with amendments*, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be **fine-free** for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, increasing the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extending increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Suggested amendments attempt to preserve local control of procedures by our Board of Trustees and professional staff.

I strongly urge this committee to *leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees* and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder, including Howard County, employ liberal waiving of fines. *When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions.* Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users, and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is a vital source of funding that helped make it possible to expand and enhance services to the Howard County community, providing \$4.2M between fiscal years 2008 and 2013 for design and construction of Howard County Library System's Miller Branch. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60M has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350M in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our specialists, customers, and K-12 students use daily,



**HOWARD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM**
Public Education for All

the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our customers. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students, and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens
President & CEO



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Jacqueline Adams, Executive Director

Dear Chairman Pinsky. Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which the Kent County Public Library would not have been able to do major renovations to the Chestertown Branch. Twenty three of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

KENT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ■ 408 HIGH STREET ■ CHESTERTOWN, MD 21620

PH: 410.778.3636 ■ FAX: 410.778.6756

www.kentcountypubliclibrary.org



Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqueline Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Jacqueline Adams

Executive Director, Kent County Public Library

KENT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ■ 408 HIGH STREET ■ CHESTERTOWN, MD 21620

PH: 410.778.3636 ■ FAX: 410.778.6756

www.kentcountylibrary.org

Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted by Janet Salazar

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Thanks to the support of the Queen Anne's County Library's Board of Library Trustees and Queen Anne's County Government, Queen Anne's County Library has been **fine-free** (for all users) since September of 2019. This bill would aid in restoring funding generously provided by Queen Anne's County's general fund. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that made our going fine-free possible. The trustees and staff of Queen Anne's County Library are very pleased to have removed this barrier to access; as expected based on national research, we did not see our return rates decrease significantly; our good will in the community has increased; and our level of service and commitment to making materials available to the community for borrowing have not been compromised.

I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details and implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Leave policy decisions in the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees and use the power of state law to empower and fund the excellent work that libraries are already doing to make education and literacy attainable for every child in the state of Maryland. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are bound by revenue constraints which this bill addresses with supportive state funding. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of the state's support of public libraries, our youngest users and their families.

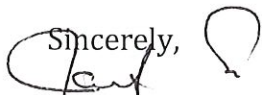
Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding without which Queen Anne's County Library would not be embarking on a building program to expand Queen Anne's County Library Kent Island Branch. We are thrilled to be planning a 10,882 SF addition to the existing facility which is less than 10,000 SF and inadequate to meet community needs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to

public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center** (SLRC) is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

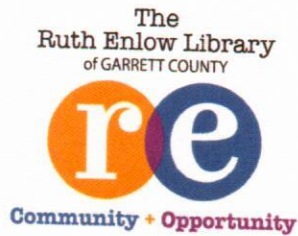
Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



Janet Salazar

Director, Queen Anne's County Library



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020
Submitted by Thomas Vose

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County would like to add its voice in support of SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act, which has the laudable goal of enabling all public libraries in the State to be fine-free for children by providing compensatory funding through the per capita State allotment to County library systems. As this bill would also increase funding for the Capital Grant program and the State Library Resource Center, we view it as a positive development for libraries throughout Maryland.

One of the fundamental goals of libraries, as you know, is to enable readers to obtain the materials they need to develop their reading skills, to discover new interests, and to help them obtain the information they need to make a difference in their lives. While lost items must be billed for until returned so as to discourage theft, and local library boards should continue to set system policies for checkout terms and billing notices, we welcome this step - overdue fees should be no barrier for children to obtain the books they need, and penalizing our young patrons for late returns is a practice we look forward to ending. With this bill potentially offsetting the impact to our funding from the loss of revenue, we hope this will lead to a great new direction for Maryland's libraries.

I would also like to add a word about the Capital Grant program – support for this has been essential for library systems all through the State to enable them to develop new buildings and retrofit old ones to meet 21st century needs. We here at Garrett County look forward to participating in this program with our Friendsville branch when the time comes – as a “temporary” structure built in 1970, it badly needs replacement.

I appreciate your consideration on this issue and hope you will support its advancement.

Sincerely,

Thomas Vose
Director
Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act

**Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 12, 2020**

Submitted by Michael Blackwell

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill will empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22. It also it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

St. Mary's County Library has already made most children's materials fine free, and we also offer a "Kid's Card" (ages birth – 17) that allow items (except DVDs—our is a reading initiative) to be checked out without fines. Next school year, we are offering a SMART (St. Mary's Access to Research and Technology) card to all students in St. Mary's County Public Schools. This bill would nevertheless restore funding to help us continue services to all ages. The amendments offered attempt to preserve the local control that allows to go offer materials without charge to young minds, ensuring timely return of materials without fine. Our library trustees and employees are delighted to remove barriers to service, especially among the underserved and families in economic need.

The amendments address some procedural details that would make implementation of this well-intended bill very difficult. Please leave implementation to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Library policy decisions are best left the capable hands of our Boards of Library Trustees, while you use the power of state law to empower and fund libraries' excellent educational work education, improving every child's prospects to be life-long learners. Seven systems are already fine-free for all users, another 11 have some variation of being fine-free for children, and the remainder employ liberal waiving of fines but are currently bound by revenue constraints that this bill would address. When to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds are, and should remain, local decisions. Without those unnecessarily specific details, this bill is a powerful statement of your support for public libraries and for growing young minds and their families.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding. Without it, St. Mary's County Public Library would not be opening our new Leonardtown Library—please plan on joining us on April 28, 2020! In many counties, commissioners are more willing to undertake new construction or substantial renovation because of this state aid. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has

been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access (and so ensuring fuller response to the 2020 Census), to the databases that our librarians, customers, and students use daily, to training on topics for employees and public, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, families, in students in public or private schools or in home-schooling, in seniors, indeed in millions of library users every year.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Michael Blackwell
Director
St. Mary's County Library
23250 Hollywood Rd
Leonardtown, MD 20650
mblackwell@stmalib.org
301-475-2846 x5013



WASHINGTON COUNTY FREE LIBRARY

February 12, 2020

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Through diligent effort between the Washington County Commissioners, the Washington County Board of Education and library staff, the Washington County Free library was able to establish the Raising Access to Improve Literacy (RAIL) cards to every student in Washington County Public Schools in 2017. These cards are unique in the sense that they provide fine-free material for children (both electronic and print) without a physical library card; when children use our library they only need to present their student ID to check out materials. This project took an immense amount of time and energy to ensure all parties felt comfortable with the policies that could, ultimately, impact all parties socially and financially.

With this I strongly urge this committee to leave procedural details of charging fines, issuing refunds and billing notices to the highly skilled professionals of Maryland's 24 public library systems. Without these constraints, this bill will stand as a powerful tool to continue Maryland's outstanding reputation for public education in our nation.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant Program is a part of the legacy of our last Library Director, Mary Baykan, and has provided immense support to libraries throughout the state. According to the most recent assessment completed in November 2019, more than half of Maryland's library buildings are over 25 years old. Many major components of these buildings beginning to fail, and to provide renovations to existing structures would cost an estimated 75 million dollars. Washington County has been the grateful recipient of this grant multiple times which has afforded the library and Washington County local government to partner in creating libraries that citizens deserve. I believe increasing the Capital Grant funding to 7.5 million will help more libraries renovate and continue to be the cornerstones of their communities.

Increasing funding to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) will continue providing access to specialized library materials and services – these resources include the SAILOR network, several databases that, without the funding from the SLRC, many libraries would not be able to afford to their patrons. Not only is increasing funding for SLRC appreciated, it will be heralded as a wise and efficient use of state funds in an effort to make Maryland libraries more equitable across the state.

Thank you for your continued support of Maryland libraries,

Respectfully,

Jenny Bakos
Washington County Free Library



Testimony in support, with amendments, of SB 524, Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act
Hearing before the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Submitted by Ashley Teagle

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is intended to empower public libraries to be fine-free for children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, it increases the funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extends increases in per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Wicomico Public Libraries (WPL) supports getting books into the hands of children without penalty. WPL has entered into a partnership with Wicomico County Public Schools to offer student virtual cards. This program allows public school students to use their public school lunch number to check out library materials with no fines, use the computers at the library and access online databases, including homework help resources and ebook collections.

As a small library system located in a county with many competing interests, the library has unfortunately taken a back seat to more pressing economic development projects such as the SBY Airport and public safety interests such as obtaining a new building for the sheriff's department. Wicomico Public Libraries is anticipating \$16,000 in fiscal year 2021 in fine and fee revenue and that figure has been entered into our proposed fiscal year 2021 budget.

I strongly urge this committee to consider the potential unintended consequences of requiring all public libraries in Maryland to go fine free for children's materials. Wicomico's local government is grappling with how to fund the Kirwan Commission recommendations and I am concerned that there are potential budget implications that have yet to be realized in Wicomico County.

Please allow me to work in cooperation with the Library's governing Board of Trustees to first create a path toward sustainable funding for the Library through the creation and implementation of a development plan. This will allow the Library, in time, to pursue fine free status for our customers on a schedule that fits in with our overall long range planning.

Supporting Learning, Building Community, Enriching Lives

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CENTRE BRANCH – Centre at Salisbury, Salisbury, MD 21801 • 410-546-5397

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Please allow our Board of Trustees to determine when to send reminder billing notices and how and when to issue refunds—this language is unnecessarily specific. I am appreciative of the powerful statement the state is making with this bill to demonstrate support for our public libraries and our youngest library users.

Maryland's **Public Library Capital Grant Program** is an invaluable source of funding which has made many critical renovations possible to two library branches in Wicomico County. This program has funded the infrastructure expansion of the Pittsville Branch. Additionally, the Downtown Branch has benefited from an elevator renovation, HVAC replacement, carpet installation upstairs and a complete bathroom renovation upstairs. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards; 23 of the State's 24 library systems have received funds to renovate, expand or construct library facilities. Fiscal Year 2020 is the thirteenth year that State assistance has been available to public libraries in Maryland. Since FY2008, \$60,025,000 has been authorized which has generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in local matching funds.

Extending funding for the **State Library Resource Center (SLRC)** is another excellent leveraging of state dollars to benefit residents across the state of Maryland. The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. From internet access via the SAILOR network, to the databases that our librarians, customers and K-12 students use on a daily basis, to training on topics like identifying fake news, the resources and staff of the SLRC are invaluable to us and to our users. This legislation provides continued investment in our State Library Resource Center which is, in turn, an investment in libraries, public school students and library users around the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle

Executive Director, Wicomico Public Libraries

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Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support, with amendments, SB 524 Public Libraries – Building Lifelong Learners Act. The bill is a strong statement of the state's support of public libraries and is intended to help public libraries offer fine-free service to children by providing an additional \$0.40 per capita in FY22, increase funding for the MD Capital Grant program from \$5 to \$7.5 million, and extend per capita funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

Worcester County Library has been fine-free for children's items since 2010. In November 2019, the trustees and staff removed remaining barriers to library access by proudly extending the fine-free policy to all items. Currently Maryland has seven fine-free public library systems, and eleven others have some variation of being fine-free for children. The remaining systems waive fines whenever possible, but depend on fine revenue to balance their budgets. I ask the committee to allow Maryland's 24 public library systems to make their own, local decisions about fines, when to send billing notices, and how to issue refunds. The Boards of Library Trustees around the state are working hard to promote literacy and champion learning experiences for children. They recognize the need to strive for unrestricted library access for children, and understand how to implement procedures that will best work in their system.

Maryland's Public Library Capital Grant program has distributed \$60,025,000 since FY2008 and generated an estimated \$350,000,000 in matching local funds. Worcester County's Berlin Branch Library opened in 2018 and received over \$1.9 million toward construction costs. The prospect of matching state grants for the project was a persuasive factor to County Administrators and County Commissioners.

The State Library Resource Centers (SLRC) maximizes the use of public funds by facilitating resource and information sharing. Increasing funding to SLRC would benefit all Maryland libraries and citizens. SLRC services are efficient, effective, and empower local library systems such as Worcester County Library by supporting workforce development programs, free internet and computer access, and early literacy initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ranck
Director