



Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** which is intended to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by Maryland libraries.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and over 300,000 active card holders, I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Howard County Library System continues to play a critical role in addressing the digital divide for the approximately 3,300 households in Howard County without broadband internet access. Our laptop and hotspot lending program enables disconnected adults and seniors to gain access to digital lifelong learning resources, gainful employment, health information, and access to civic and cultural participation.

Our role is just as critical in providing supports for the more than 57,000 K-12 students served by our library. Howard County Library System provides every student an A+ student account giving them access to books and eBooks, free online homework help, and online resources for assignments and out of school learning.

Southern MD Regional Library Association (SMRLA) and the other regional libraries are invaluable to the rural counties. They provide funding for downloadable digital material in addition to necessary training, IT, material processing services, and daily delivery of collections between branches. Without the support of our regional library Calvert Library would not be able to meet our community's needs without significant cuts to our current public service.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens, President & CEO
Howard County Library System



Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the critical work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic. On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees and the 9,282 regular card holders which is almost half of our county population, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Kent County Public Library system has been instrumental in connecting students and remote workers to the internet via hotspots and a Chromebook lending program. Hardware was purchased with CARES Act and ARPA funding and is being sustained with careful management of budgets as the need for additional means of connectivity is still very much present in the County. Additionally, we have given out over 150 Amazon Kindle Fires to ensure community members have access to technology permanently in their homes.

Thanks to the Building Lifelong Learners Act, we instituted fine-free borrowing for minors, and due to the pandemic, we have gone fine-free for adults as well. At present, our visitor door count is back up, but we still offer services like curbside pick-up availability and program kits.

In conjunction with the health department, we have been a mask and test kit distribution site, sharing trustworthy information and holding vaccine clinics. However, before this partnership, Kent County was one of the first libraries systems in the state to pass out 200 at-home test kits in response to the increase of positive COVID-19 cases.

As one of the smallest counties in Maryland, we could not be as successful without the support of the Eastern Shore Regional Library. They have provided funding for vital staff training, material delivery services to all eight counties on the shore, and expanded access to ebook collections. We respectfully ask for your support of HB 685, which will allow us to continue to grow our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

V/R,

Arnessa Dowell
KCPL Executive Director

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

PH: 410.778.3636 ■ FAX: 410.778.6756

www.kentcountylibrary.org



Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** which is intended to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical to ensure the continued important work being done throughout the state through all Maryland libraries.

On behalf of the Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees, the more than 219,000 library active library card holders and our community, I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by the Budget and Taxation Committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Harford County Public Library has committed to closing the digital divide and investing resources into Wi-Fi Hotspots to ensure that all members of our community, with special focus on our school children and their families along with our seniors, to ensure equitable access to online resources and minimize the connectivity dessert that some of our most vulnerable populations experience. During the pandemic, it was noted that local Maryland Libraries provided critical community services and resources that kept people engaged and informed through access to telemedicine, access to school, access to work and employment and more.

Our Maryland regional libraries are invaluable to the rural counties. They provide funding for downloadable digital material in addition to essential training, technology, material processing services, and daily delivery of collections between branches. Without the support of our regional libraries, Maryland Public Libraries would struggle to meet the critical and e3ssential needs in our rural communities and face limited access to public service. Maryland public libraries are known for their collaborative spirit that spills into creating equitable library services to all Maryland residents whether rural, suburban or urban and I encourage you to continue to support this services.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding and providing excellent service throughout the state. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, and expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Hastler, CEO



Ways and Means Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished Committee Members,

It is vital to Maryland's residents in an information economy that you support **HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**.

This bill extends per capita is intended to extend increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases are critical for support your community by allowing for library services.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

St. Mary's County Library offers great service through its own efforts and through partnerships that leverage our funding. We provide a fine-free library card to all public-school students and are working to extend that card to private school students as well. Students have in-school and at-home access to a wealth of databases and ebooks to assist with their studies. We have offered Wi-Fi hotspots to help ensure that all areas of our county have essential broadband access. All county residents have been able to enjoy our expanded and frequent online programming, including story times for children and educational and book club programs for teens and adults. Our use of ebooks and digital audiobooks has grown over 40% in the last two years, allowing residents to enjoy quality materials even in times when the pandemic made it safer to remain home.

Our three branches have also remained open. We have partnered with our County Health Department to share important and accurate information and distribute over 7,000 COVID test kits and over 70,000 KN-95 masks. We offer essential job help, small business assistance, literacy programs, computer and internet access, and of course high-quality reading materials and a safe and comfortable community space. Our meetings rooms are open and heavily used, helped by grant-provided air filters that effectively remove virus particles and allow safe gathering.

Per capita funding, as supported by HB 685 with amendment, is necessary for our operations to continue. It provides for fully a quarter of our budget, ensuring that all county residents have equitable access to information so that all may thrive and grow and engage in self-realization.

HB 685 also provides support for regional libraries, including the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SRMLA) that serves St. Mary's. Established to help ensure that state funding is spread throughout less populous, counties, SMRLA is vital to our work, providing training, our email system, our circulation system, inter-county delivery and exchange of materials, and increased ebook access. This funding is also crucial to support libraries.

Thank you for your past support of libraries and for supporting HB 685 as amended! Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. You help us make the difference.

Administrative Offices
23630 Hayden Farm Lane
Leonardtown, MD 20650
301-475-2151
FAX: 301-884-4415
info@stmalib.org

Charlotte Hall Library
37600 New Market Road
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
301-884-2211
FAX: 301-884-2113
hall.manager@stmalib.org

Leonardtown Library
23630 Hayden Farm Lane
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301-475-2846
FAX: 301-884-4415
stma.manager@stmalib.org

Lexington Park Library
21677 FDR Blvd
Lexington Park, MD 20653
301-863-8188
FAX: 301-863-2550
lexi.manager@stmalib.org



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Blackwell".

Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary's County Library.

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Budget and Tax Committee

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March 29, 2022

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Sincerely,

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Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary's County Library.

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WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Testimony in support with amendment of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
Hearings before the Budget and Taxation Committee

March 29, 2022

Submitted by Jenny Bakos, Executive Director
Washington County Free Library

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the 76,875 library card holders in Washington County, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

The Washington County Free Library is a life line to community members who are seeking employment, looking for safe-spaces after school, free internet access and opportunities to expand their horizons. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted this life line, as we pivoted to provide more services (within a few weeks of initial outbreak) while many organizations in the country scaled down their offerings. We enabled patrons to reach out to trusted librarians for reliable information via phone and email, pivoted to a curbside approach for citizens to access collections and moved programming online for patrons to enjoy in the safety of their own home.

Most recently, we have partnered with the Washington County Health Department to be the main distribution site for COVID-19 tests and KN95 masks, and have been able to host vaccination clinics around the County.

Washington County also houses the Western Maryland Regional Library, which is instrumental in making sure collection is available to patrons. Without their support, the offerings of print and digital materials would be dramatically less, and we would be unable to keep up with the staggering demand. Their daily delivery service to Garrett and Allegany Counties ensures that community members across Western Maryland have equitable access to information. Western Maryland Regional Library also provides WCFL with quality staff development opportunities, and excellent support for the integrated library system (catalog) and website.

We respectfully ask for your support in funding public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Jenny L. Bakos
Executive Director
Washington County Free Library



Budget and Tax Committee

HB 685 - Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chair, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

At the start of the pandemic, public libraries safely transformed the delivery of lifelong learning services with curbside delivery, we moved our reading programs to outdoor story times and events, and we added additional virtual storytimes and found a new audience as entire day care centers could now attend virtually.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date. We strongly urge the Senate to adopt legislation that increases funding more closely to that adopted by the Senate through Senate Bill 448.

In short, there is no limit to what we can do and how we can help if we are given the resources. This bill provides a steady stream of income that is a vital component to the many ways in addition to books and movies that we adapt and transform to serve our communities.

We ask for your support of HB 685 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John E. Taube".

John E. Taube
Executive Director



Budget and Taxation Committee
HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
March 29, 2022
Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding which is intended to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries.

I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Caroline County Public Library staff moved very quickly to continue to serve our citizens throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes providing laptops and hotspots for loan, as the lack of Internet access is still a huge issue in Caroline County. We've pivoted and adapted to the continued pandemic to provide our early literacy storytimes and Summer reading program, encouraging our children to read over the school break. Our three branches are the business and tech assistance centers for printing, photocopies, faxing, and computer access and training in our county. Additionally our branches serve as adjunct job centers, partnering with our local workforce development partners. Our branches are a safe haven for many of our youth after school and summers. Currently we are partnering with the Health Department to distribute face masks and COVID self-test kits.

We are grateful to have the support of the Eastern Shore Regional Library, which serves the eight Eastern Shore public library systems. ESRL's support ensures all our residents have access to ebooks and other electronic resources. ESRL manages our automated circulation system, saving us money and helping us better share our resources on the Eastern Shore. ESRL's delivery system provides our library customers prompt deliveries of items borrowed from not only the Eastern Shore, but the rest of the Maryland public libraries. ESRL staff provide technical assistance and access to the professional training our staff need to meet certification requirements. ESRL also provides our E. S. public libraries with Wi-Fi, which extends to our parking lots for after-hours Internet access.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.

Sincerely,

Debby Bennett, Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

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

Federalsburg Branch
123 Morris Avenue
Federalsburg, 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



Centreville 121 South Commerce St., Centreville, MD, 21617 | 410-758-0980

Kent Island 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD, 21666 | 410-643-8161

Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill's intent is to extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees and our 50,651 library card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

Queen Anne's County Library has been an important part of the ongoing recovery from the pandemic. Since the pandemic started, we have adapted our services to meet the needs of our community. Laptop lending, programming kits to go, expanded Books by Mail, and curbside service for safe delivery of library materials were just some of the ways the library responded to help the community during this time. These services were made possible in part through the CARES Act. We've now expanded our services to include the distribution of KN95 masks and Covid-19 home test kits in partnership with the Queen Anne's County Health Department. All of these services are needed and all of them require enough staff to respond to the need and enough funds to provide the service.

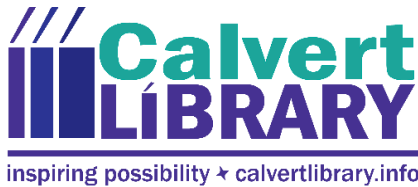
While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date. We strongly urge the Senate to adopt legislation that increases funding more closely to that adopted by the Senate through Senate Bill 448. The per capita funding increases for public libraries is crucial to maintain our basic services and to adapt our services as needed to quickly respond to our ever changing environment.

The Eastern Shore Regional Library, the shore's regional resource center, also provides needed services for our library. Without the support of our regional resource center, there would be no sharing of materials between public libraries on the eastern shore. Our regional provides the vehicle and drivers for to provide this service to all residents on the shore. Without the support of our regional resource center, our database offerings would be nonexistent. Our digital books and movies would not be available. Our Facilities Master Plan would not be done. The Eastern Shore Regional Library provides support to all eight county library systems on the shore. The increase in funding for our regional resource center is crucial to keeping our libraries moving forward and adapting to what the future may bring.

We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Janet Salazar, Director



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

Budget and Taxation Committee
HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
March 29, 2022
Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** which is intended to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 50,000 regular card holders and 24,500 Kids Card holders, I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Calvert Library has invested in hotspots and Chromebooks to insure that patrons were connected to work, school and community throughout the pandemic. Devices were purchased with grant funding but ongoing data renewals, which are still necessary, require increases to library budgets. We also continue to do the daily work of assisting customers with digital literacy, teaching users how to use downloadable materials, apply for jobs online, and find materials to borrow in person and digitally. Teachers rely on their students' special Calvert Library student card for access to downloadable books, trustworthy information and primary source material.

Southern MD Regional Library Association (SMRLA) and the other regional libraries are invaluable to the rural counties. They provide funding for downloadable digital material in addition to necessary training, IT, material processing services, and daily delivery of collections between branches. Without the support of our regional library Calvert Library would not be able to meet our community's needs without significant cuts to our current public service.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.

Sincerely,

Carrie Willson
Executive Director



Budget and Taxation Committee

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March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment Support

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I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** which is intended to extend per capita increases through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Library Board of Trustees and our 8,000 card holders, I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned with those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$0.20 increase in the Regional Resource Center and Per Capita funding formulas adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls, including more than a \$10,000 decrease (3%) in Somerset's Library funding following adjustments from the 2020 Census. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Throughout the pandemic, the Library has expanded services in new directions to serve our community. Using ARPA funds, we have acquired laptops for patron use and expanded our wireless networks.

The Library debuted take-home and virtual programming during the pandemic, and both of these have remained popular even as we resume in-person events and classes. We also rolled out curbside pickup during the pandemic and have assisted the Health Department by distributing test kits and hosting vaccine clinics.

Support from the Eastern Shore Regional Library is vital to providing services to our community. The Regional Library's electronic materials budget alone provides Somerset County residents with access to more than \$500,000 worth of eBooks, premium databases, and audio and video content. The Regional Library is also vital in administering our collection management software, providing materials delivery, and providing a wealth of professional development opportunities.

We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ed Goyda, Library Director

Crisfield Princess Anne Erwell

11767 Beechwood Street, Princess Anne, MD 21853

phone: 410.651.0852

fax: 410.651.1388

www.somelibrary.org

Budget and Taxation Committee
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The Dorchester County Public Library continually strives to meet the needs of its community through new and innovative methods. This includes the circulation of mobile hotspots, distribution of masks and COVID-19 test kits, virtual and take-home programming opportunities, ongoing curbside services, and the creation of a safe environment for patrons and staff. The Library's partnership with the Health Department was strengthened during the pandemic as we worked together to disseminate trustworthy information and the locations of vaccine and testing clinics, including an upcoming vaccine clinic in the Library's Meeting Room, this April. In recognition of these services, the Library was the recipient of the Heart of the Chesapeake Rising Up Organizational Excellence Award for significant achievement for initiating innovative solutions to address access to library materials due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While maintaining the services listed above, the Library began to address declining in-person visits with increased outreach to better meet the patrons where they are within the community. We also began working closely with the Board of Trustees to develop an opportunity to restore Library service to the southern portion of the County for the first time since the Bookmobile was removed from service in 2011. Additionally, the Library was awarded an ARPA grant in fiscal year 2022 to support increased ADA technologies and services.

The public libraries of the Eastern Shore are essential to their communities and the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL) supports their efforts through the provision of training, database access, delivery service, technological support, and access to digital materials. Without their services, the Dorchester County Public Library could not effectively meet patron needs. Nearly all of the Library's new materials are purchased through a grant provided by ESRL and their staff oversees our technology upgrades as well as the Eastern Shore ILS Consortium. Quite simply, they are the backbone for all that we do.

Sincerely,
Crystal Henningsen



Director,
Dorchester County Public Library



ENOCH PRATT
free LIBRARY

Budget and Taxation Committee
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Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic. We respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library has been instrumental in connecting students and remote workers to the internet via hotspots and Chromebook lending program. Hardware was purchased with CARES Act and ARPA funding and is being sustained with careful management of budgets as the need for additional means of connectivity is still very much present in the Baltimore City.

Thanks to the Building Lifelong Learners Act, public libraries across the state instituted fine-free borrowing for minors. I'm happy to advise that the Enoch Pratt Free Library has been fine free for more than four years, resulting in improved access to our customers. While library visits have been down during the pandemic, we have held programs virtually, instituted curbside pick-up of materials, purchased more electronic materials, and improved wi-fi in communities across the city benefitting customers without internet availability. We have conducted virtual wellness checks on customers and distributed free masks and COVID test kits throughout the library system to help protect our communities.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library also serves as the State Library Resource Center, the hub of the state library network providing specialized service to libraries and customers around the State. This legislation would support our partners, the Regional Resource Centers who collaborate with us daily on service delivery.

We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Heidi Daniel
Chief Executive Officer
Enoch Pratt Free Library



Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 28, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** which is intended to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries.

I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Frederick County Public Libraries remains committed to simplifying access and building bridges in our community.

During the pandemic, we upgraded hardware to extend the reach of wifi beyond our walls. In a county where broadband access is limited and others face economic barriers to access, our wifi service has been a lifeline. We have seen record use – up 22% in the past 6 months.

We expanded eContent and print collections to help meet skyrocketing demand.

We stayed nimble by adapting service models to continue providing access to library collections and programming while keeping the community and staff safe.

We leveraged partnerships to extend our reach.

Our Student Success Card program with Frederick County Public Schools ensures that every student has access to the public library's collections and to digital products like Brainfuse which provides live tutoring assistance. This added

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FREDERICK
COUNTY
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support was critical as students transitioned into and out of virtual learning environments.

With Frederick County Workforce Services, we are partnering on a project to deploy laptops and hotspots to aid in job searching, resume writing, and virtual interviews.

Finally, with the Frederick County Health Department, our team regularly assisted at vaccine clinics and we now host weekly vaccine clinics at four of our library branches. Additionally, our team distributed over 3,000 test kits and 95,000 KN95 masks.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James Kelly
Director
Frederick County Public Libraries
110 East Patrick St.
Frederick, MD 21701
(301) 600-3767

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Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries continue to aid in recovery from the pandemic.

Although we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. In Western Maryland for example, Allegany County saw a population decrease of over 2,300 from FY22 to FY23 and Garrett County's population decreased by over 200. This loss of population will result in a net decrease in their funding at a time when the inflation rate is closing in on 8%. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY23 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Public Libraries, and the Regional Libraries that support them, were instrumental in maintaining connections for people all across the state as schools and business were shut down during the pandemic. Through hotspot and Chromebook lending programs as well as Wi-Fi extenders that reached into library parking lots, public libraries provided Internet connectivity for so many who had nowhere else to turn at a time when access to the Internet was critical.

The Western Maryland Regional Library (WMRL) for its part provided hotspots and Chromebooks to each of the three county library systems in Western Maryland to supplement their collections. WMRL provided PPE funding to each system so they could reopen to the public safely and as soon as possible. In addition, WMRL created a collection of homeschool kits on a wide variety of topics including science, geography, music, and art that could be checked out by parents whose children were suddenly home schooling.

WMRL provides a wide variety of resources and services to its counties that they could not otherwise afford including staff training, delivery service, web services, and physical collections like print books and audio books on CD. However, when the libraries had to shut down in March of 2020 the importance of WMRL was keenly felt through its collection of online resources and streaming services. In FY21 library customers streamed or downloaded over 228,000 movies, television shows, audio books, ebooks, music, and comics all for free, a growth of 54% over FY19. Practically overnight libraries had to pivot to an online only model and each Regional Library in the state was crucial to its success. Overall WMRL provided over \$1,159,000.00 of support to the three county library systems in Western Maryland. Without this support the citizens of Western Maryland would be at a distinct disadvantage compared to the more populous counties in the state.

The Maryland legislature has demonstrated over time its support of libraries and the critical role they play in the education and overall welfare of their communities. We ask that you continue this support during these extraordinary times when the citizens of Maryland need our services more than ever and urge the Senate to adopt legislation that increases funding more closely to that adopted by the Senate through Senate bill 448.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth M. Hulett

Director

Western Maryland Regional Library

Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding**, which would extend per capita increases through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in libraries across the state

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 41,000+ card holders and 5,200+ Kids Card holders, I respectfully urge you to adopt spending levels that are closer to those your committee already adopted in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

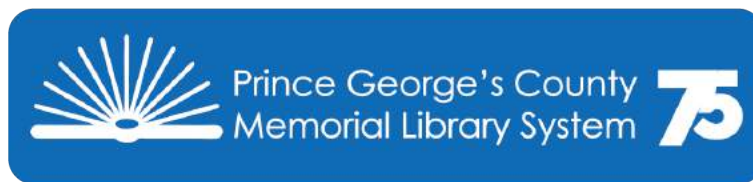
Some ways the Charles County Public Library met customer needs during the pandemic include: pivoted to virtual programming, expanded digital resources, introduced curbside pickup of materials, offered 24 hr. WiFi service in branch parking lots, reduced barriers to library services by going fine-free for all users in April 2021, increased our number of mobile hotspots for checkout to address the digital divide, added Chromebook/hotspot bundles for checkout, launched the Imagination Library of Charles County in October 2021 to provide free books every month for participating Charles County children up to the age of 5, were awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants to purchase a new Outreach van to reach underserved areas, and install WiFi antennas on our branch library roofs to expand coverage, partnered with the Charles County Health Department to distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits and KN95 face masks to the community.

Charles County libraries and residents are also served by the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA). SMRLA provides support through material ordering and cataloging functions, inter-library loan administration, delivery services, and training opportunities for staff. Crucially, SMRLA helped meet community demand by expanding the ebook collections for all Southern Maryland libraries when library doors were closed due to the pandemic.

We respectfully ask the Senate to adopt legislation that increases funding for public and regional libraries at a rate more closely aligned to SB 448 rather than HB 685. Thank you for your efforts to support Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

KennethWayne Thompson
Executive Director



Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 - Education - Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities by Maryland's public libraries, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System Board of Library Trustees, our 750,000+ active card holders, and our 338+ staff, I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

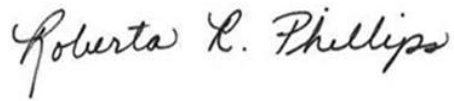
While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing significant budget shortfalls that will lead to reduced services and hours. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) continues to swiftly adapt its services to meet the needs of our community. Our national award-winning Workforce and Community Development program provides job readiness resources, programs, and support for Prince George's County residents. We worked to bridge employability gaps by focusing on the digital divide during the pandemic by providing innovative virtual programming, training, and community partnerships. PGCMLS developed a [microsite](#) and [business wiki](#) to improve equitable access to resources for all customers, including those transitioning into entrepreneurship. These programs and services have led directly to Prince George's County residents gaining employment during a period of up to 11% unemployment.

Prince George's County Memorial Library System is a committed and trusted partner providing critical health and wellness resources to our community. In addition to curating and promoting timely and authoritative health information for our customers, we have worked hand-in-hand with the Maryland and Prince George's County's Health Departments to host vaccination clinics and mass distribution events for rapid test kits and KN95 masks. PGCMLS has been able to fill vital information and resource gaps through innovative services such as our bilingual COVID-19 vaccine hunter hotline.

Our libraries are embedded in and serve our diverse communities like no other entity. We continue to fill the critical demand for services by job seekers, small business owners, students, and Marylanders of all ages. Maryland's public libraries and regional resource centers have always been responsible stewards of our state per capita funding, consistently doing more with less. I respectfully ask for your support of HB 685, which will allow Maryland's libraries to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roberta L. Phillips". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Roberta Phillips
Chief Executive Officer

Eastern Shore REGIONAL LIBRARY

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

Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries, especially as we play a key role in aiding our communities' recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc. and the eight county library systems we represent, I respectfully urge you to adopt legislation that increases funding at levels more closely aligned to those adopted by your committee in Senate Bill 448.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date.

As a supporting organization for eight county library systems, Eastern Shore Regional Library has witnessed the great work done by our public libraries over the last several years. Libraries bounced back quickly after early COVID-19 closings and found new ways to reach out to impacted citizens. In the rural areas, our libraries succeeded in extending Internet connectivity to citizens in remote areas - helping schools, local governments, and small businesses realize their missions.

The Eastern Shore Regional Library has one responsibility and that is helping our member libraries provide the highest quality services to their users. During the pandemic, ESRL distributed \$150,000 in CARES funds to the eight library systems to help with PPE, Internet expansion, and service adjustments like curbside materials pickup. ESRL circulated 333,054 streaming books and media resources in fy21, a remarkable 15% increase over fy20.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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

Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 29, 2022

Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing to support HB 685 Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding. The bill is intended to ensure that Maryland's 24 Public Libraries and their Regional Resource Centers have sustained funding for the coming fiscal years, so they can provide for the information and educational needs of their communities.

Communities throughout Maryland depend on their public libraries to provide a myriad of services, programs and resources. In times of crisis, such as the ones we have experienced in the last 2 years, libraries have become more important than ever. Beyond being a place where individuals borrow items to read, listen or view, they are community hubs. Libraries across the state provide test kits and masks, serve as vaccine clinic locations, expanded their Wi-Fi signals to allow people to connect to the internet, engage in online programs to help people feel connected and informed, created pickup services to provide materials to people safely during the height of the pandemic, and continue to serve the information needs of people across their areas. They also supply workforce development training, introduce communities to new technology, and provide training to help prepare the next generation workforce.

Carroll County Public Library recently opened Exploration Commons. This 14,000 sq. ft. high-tech makerspace and commercial teaching kitchen is where we are doing workforce development training and enrichment workshops. Classes include coding, design and fabrication, nutrition and wellness, and use of AR/VR and AV equipment as well as providing the community with a suite of meeting rooms. Public libraries across Maryland are developing new and innovative services to meet the needs of the people in their community.

The Regional Resource Centers provide crucial support for the Western, Southern and Eastern Shore regions of Maryland. The Regionals support the work of their public libraries through technology support, staff development and training, delivery services, marketing and publicity, website support and many other services. By providing these services to the libraries in their region, they allow those public libraries to focus their manpower, resources, and funding to improving their collections, providing programs and serving their unique communities.

Maryland has a strong history of valuing its educational organizations, such as public libraries. This legislation will allow libraries to continue to develop and grow the next generation of libraries. Thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,



Andrea Berstler
Executive Director, Carroll County Public Library



**Ways and Means Committee
HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
Support**

March 29, 2022

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

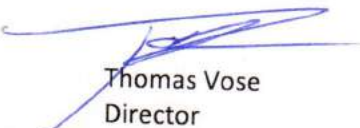
I would like to add my voice in support HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding, which is intended to extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. Though a \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates is helpful, it is difficult to cover the shortfalls we face with such funding, and though we have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date. Funding at levels closer to that of SB 448 would serve that purpose.

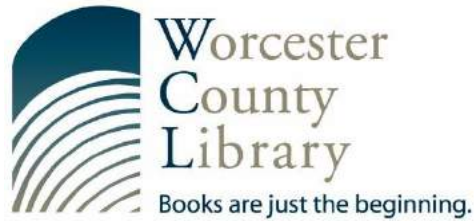
Throughout the pandemic, the Ruth Enlow Library has worked to meet the changing needs of our community in any way we can. We have proudly partnered with the Health Department and served as the main conduit in the County for getting free COVID-19 test kits and KN95 masks to our citizens. We have developed new resources and take-home programs for the many kids who have had to learn at home during this period, and specifically reached out to the homeschooling community to ensure that we are meeting their needs. We have expanded our in-house Wifi to the parking lots and obtained Wifi hotspots and Chromebook computers to help bridge a digital divide that remains very real in Garrett County. And thanks to the Building Lifelong Learners Act, we have also been happy to be able to remove fines as an obstacle preventing kids in our community from checking out materials.

But we can't do it alone, and the Western Maryland Regional Library (WMRL) has been an invaluable support enabling our efforts. The delivery service they provide has welded together the Garrett, Allegany and Washington County library systems ensuring that patrons of any have access to all three collections. Their financial support paid for the Chromebook computers and hotspots we now check out, and the online resources and ebook collections they fund would be impossible for us to obtain without them. Support for the Regional Resource Centers is critical for a smaller system like ours.

We respectfully ask for full funding of HB 685 at a level that will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Thomas Vose
Director
Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County



Budget and Taxation Committee
HB685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding
March 28, 2022
Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. This bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27 and will help all corners of Maryland provide valuable resources to our communities.

While we appreciate the \$.20 increase in the Regional Resource Library Center and Per Capita funding formulas as adopted by the House of Delegates, libraries across the State are facing budget shortfalls. We have requested supplemental funding from Governor Hogan to help offset these FY 2023 shortfalls and have not been successful to date. We strongly urge the Senate to adopt legislation that increases funding more closely to that adopted by the Senate through Senate Bill 448.

Worcester County Library eliminated fines for children’s materials in 2010 and went completely fine free for all materials in November 2019 prior to the Building Lifelong Learners Act passed in 2021. We are proud to have removed that barrier, and it served us well during the pandemic when we closed our book returns for 7 weeks during the spring of 2020. At the time, many libraries, including Worcester, quarantined returned items as a precaution and patrons were relieved not to have to worry about overdue fines.

Thanks to CARES act funding, we expanded our reach by lending hotspots and laptops to patrons. Many families had to juggle both children learning at home and parents working from home. In a rural county like Worcester, connectivity is often limited. This funding increase will help maintain these services, which continue to be a lifeline for many. The COVID-19 pandemic also propelled our Library system to turn our services outward. We began offering virtual programs, expanded remote printing service to all five branches, and offered curbside pick-up of library items. We looked for any avenue we could to help our community persevere. We used our 3D printers to print mask extenders for health care workers, scheduled vaccine appointments for our local health department, and are now currently passing out both KN95 masks and at-home test kits.

Our library is fortunate to be a member of the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL). ESRL provides the eight county library systems on Maryland’s Eastern Shore with daily delivery of library materials, IT support, and essential training. They offer a high quality collection of eBooks and established a “Dial-a-Story” service for families when our in-person storytime programs were suspended due to the pandemic.

The Worcester County Library is more vibrant than ever and we respectfully request that you ensure that HB 685 align more closely to SB 448 which will allow us to continue to fulfill our role in our community. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your consideration of this bill.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Ranck
Director