

**SB0448-BT\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 448**

### *Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 15, 2022

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 448. This bill would update the minimum required state and local funding for libraries and would better align the state's financial support to recognize the expanded role libraries play.

Libraries and regional resource centers increasingly serve growing purposes for Maryland's communities. Maryland's families seek these unique public institutions for educational and childcare support, access to technological resources and high-quality internet, labor and employment aid, and cultural enrichment. In essence, libraries and regional resource centers are a critical nexus of resources, community engagement, and enrichment unique to other community infrastructure – and the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the need for maintaining and deepening the role they play in Maryland's communities. In short, our libraries and regional resource centers serve many more purposes for their communities than their original charge.

With an expanded purpose, however, comes greater need, which counties deeply understand. Local governments have long histories of exceeding mandated funding requirements and equipping public libraries with financial and operation support more than these requirements. In fact, Baltimore City and all 23 county governments currently fund their respective libraries above the current required minimum set in state law. They proudly do so because they know the success of local governments hinges on that of the families and communities they serve.

Unfortunately, state support has lagged behind that provided by local governments, despite the growing need. SB 448 offers an opportunity for the State to realign its financial support of these critical facilities with the level of support offered by local governments.

Counties welcome increased partnership and support from the State, especially at a time when libraries and regional resource centers are serving new and evolving roles in their communities that necessitate deeper investment. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 448 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

**SB 448 - MoCo\_Boucher\_FAV (GA 22).pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathleen Boucher

Position: FAV



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550**

**ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270**

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**SB 448**

**DATE: February 15, 2022**

**SPONSOR: Senator King**

**ASSIGNED TO: Budget and Taxation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Kathleen Boucher ([kathleen.boucher@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:kathleen.boucher@montgomerycountymd.gov))**

**POSITION: Support**

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### **Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding**

This bill increases per capita State funding for public libraries and regional resource centers in each of the next five fiscal years. For county libraries, the per capita funding increases from \$17.10 per resident in fiscal 2022 to \$20.00 per resident in fiscal 2027 and each year thereafter. In fiscal 2022, the Montgomery County public library system received \$3.5 million in State aid. Each year the cost of providing materials and services rises for public libraries across the State. The increased amount of per capita State funding required under this bill would allow the Montgomery County Public Libraries system as well as other library systems across the State to address increased costs and continue to purchase and provide those materials and services to their communities.

The County strongly supports the bill and respectfully requests that the Budget and Taxation Committee give the bill a favorable report.

# **Carroll SB448 Support Letter Feb 2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andrea Berstler

Position: FWA

1100 Green Valley Road  
New Windsor, MD 21776



CARROLL COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
*Infinite Possibilities*

410-386-4500 tel  
library.carr.org

Testimony in support of SB 448, Public Libraries – Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding

Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Tuesday, February 15 at 1 pm

Submitted by Andrea Berstler

Dear Committee Chair Guzzone and Distinguished Senators:

I am writing to support SB 448 Public Libraries – Education – 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.

Committee Chair Guzzone and Distinguished Senators

Tuesday, February 15 at 1 pm

Page 2

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,

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

Legislative Officer, Maryland Library Association

**SB 448\_MAPLA ALL\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Isaac Meyer

Position: FWA



# Southern Maryland

## Regional Library Association, Inc.

*Advancing Library Excellence*

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### Budget and Taxation Committee

### SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

February 15, 2022

### Support

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

The Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) partners with Southern Maryland's public libraries to implement services to support over 373,000 Marylanders. We administered over \$60,000 in CARES Act funding which the libraries used to purchase PPE for their staff; hotspots and the service required to use them; signage; and equipment for virtual programming.

We were able to pivot from in person training to virtual training. These trainings help our library workers earn their required continuing education credits in order to maintain their certification. As our public library partners pivoted to curbside services to keep books in the hands of customers, we prepared over 54,000 items for check out. Through our regional and statewide cooperative lending agreements, we sent over one million items through our delivery service.

Once the public libraries were able to reopen safely, we dedicated over \$220,000 to support the implementation of radio frequency identification (RFID). This project allows customers to check out materials without staff intervention and also helps library staff expedite checking in materials once they are returned.

To support access to digital collections, SMRLA dedicated \$200,000 in FY 21 to ebook collections. With the pandemic ongoing, SMRLA anticipates needing to continue to implement new technology and to purchase more digital collections to help public libraries serve their customers.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle, CEO



**Budget and Taxation Committee**

**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

**February 15, 2022**

**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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 – particularly vital as, between economic and geographic barriers to digital equity, Somerset County households are significantly less likely than average state residents to have a computer (83.4% vs. 92.4%) or a broadband connection (73.7% vs. 86.4%).

The Library also 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 that would be out of range, by an order of magnitude, for us to attempt to purchase and manage on our own. The Regional Library is also vital in administering our collection management software, providing daily delivery both between our branches and to our branches from the rest of the State, and providing a wealth of professional development opportunities for Somerset Library staff.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448, which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ed Goyda

Library Director

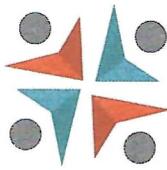
*Crisfield Princess Anne Ewell*

11767 Beechwood Street, Princess Anne, MD 21853

phone: 410.651.0852

fax: 410.651.1388

[www.somelibrary.org](http://www.somelibrary.org)



WASHINGTON COUNTY  
FREE LIBRARY

*Where People & Possibilities Meet*

Testimony in support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding  
Hearings before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

February 15, 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 **SB 448 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.

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 of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Jenny L. Bakos  
Executive Director  
Washington County Free Library



## **Budget and Taxation Committee**

### **SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

**February 15, 2022**

#### **Support**

February 7, 2022

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

I am writing in support of SB 448 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.

Despite a challenging year in which the library was closed to in-person visits for 37 weeks out of the year, operated under limited capacity for 48 weeks, and unable to offer popular indoor programming throughout the entire year, Wicomico Public Libraries adapted and persisted in serving our community.

During the last fiscal year, Wicomico Public Libraries provided service at 13,310 curbside appointments. 2,863 patrons attended 288 online programs that connected people to their community during a time when many of our neighbors were experiencing isolation. The library accommodated 36,641 “virtual visits” at which patrons connected with library services and resources from the safety of their homes. The library provided 15,144 wireless sessions, connecting people to the internet including by circulating mobile hotspots. The number of library card holders grew to 68,301 active users representing over 65% of the growing population we serve.

Throughout the pandemic, the library served as a source for information and equal access to important public health information. The library has partnered with the local health department to host vaccination clinics, and distribute thousands of test kits and masks to the public

We have relied on funding provided to Regional Resource Centers especially for ensuring access to digital content such as eBooks, online journals, databases, and other research tools. The Regional Centers also provide vital training and professional development tools for our staff as we adapt to rapid changes caused by the pandemic.

EDUCATE. INNOVATE. INSPIRE.

PAUL S. SARBANES BRANCH – 122 South Division Street, Salisbury, MD 21801 (410) 749-3612

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

PITTSVILLE BRANCH – 34372 Old Ocean City Road, Pittsville, MD 21850 (410) 835-2353

[www.wicomicolibraries.org](http://www.wicomicolibraries.org)



Support for the regional resource centers is an effective and efficient way to strengthen local libraries. For that reason, we wholeheartedly express our support for SB 448 as vital to Wicomico Public Libraries.

As the new Executive Director of Wicomico Public Libraries, I am focused on expanding our reach to all areas of the county, strengthening our partnerships and programs, improving our facilities and technology, and developing the library as an asset that improves the quality of life for residents and adds value to our community.

Respectfully, we ask that you support SB 448 bill 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 black ink, appearing to read 'Seth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Seth Hershberger, Director

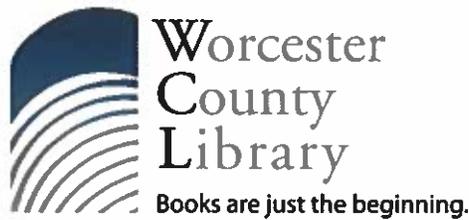
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**Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding**  
**February 15, 2022**  
**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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 SB 448 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Ranck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Ranck  
Director



**Budget and Taxation Committee**

**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

**February 15, 2022**

**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

Since public libraries have reopened their doors to the public, our efforts to support our communities expanded with the partnerships to distribute KN95 masks and rapid test kits to worried constituents. Allegan and many libraries have also stepped up to serve as vaccination clinic sites. Here in Western Maryland we went a step further and started to check out WiFi Hotspots and Chromebooks to help citizens without internet access in our communities.

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 SB 448 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**  
**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**  
**February 15, 2022**  
**Support**

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

Over the last two years, Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) has provided a lifeline for many residents. Working with our partners in public health, AACPL staff have given out nearly 65,000 COVID-19 test kits and 250,000 high quality masks. We were the first system in the state to hold vaccine clinics and have already offered 63 opportunities to people of all ages.

Library staff have helped people navigate the safety net benefits process and get jobs. They have given away food, books, diapers and wipes. In fact, our Discoveries Library location at Westfield Annapolis Mall opened a community pantry in July for baby and menstrual products and have already served over 1,300 people. We are proud to report that the pantry was the recent recipient of ARPA funding for supplies.

In addition to the work we are known for, specifically loaning out books, movies and music, AACPL staff have built countless new services like curbside pickup, virtual programs and Chromebook/hotspot borrowing. We also enhanced our Wi-Fi for outdoor use during the most dangerous times of the pandemic. Libraries are trusted community resources that are vital to the health and wellbeing of a community. Residents know that when they come to the library, they can feel confident in what they discover and in what they receive whether that's a COVID-19 test kit, training on how to build a resume, or kindergarten readiness classes. Best of all, we proudly serve everyone!

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in providing resources and supporting access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Skip Auld", is written in a cursive style.

Skip Auld, AACPL Chief Executive Officer

Anne Arundel County  
Public Library  
5 Harry S. Truman Parkway  
Annapolis MD 21401  
**410-222-7371**  
aacpl.net



**Budget and Taxation Committee**

**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

**February 15, 2022**

**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) has been instrumental in connecting residents with the resources they need to succeed and thrive. During the pandemic, BCPL distributed Wi-Fi hotspots and Chrome books to address digital inequity, masks and self-test kits for COVID response, meals to mitigate food insecurity amongst children, and even winter coats on one of the coldest days of the year. BCPL launched two key initiatives during the pandemic to serve the most vulnerable among us – our Social Worker in the Library service and the Mobile Library Law Center. Time and again, BCPL has stepped up to the plate and worked well beyond the scope of traditional libraries to support our community.

BCPL and all public libraries in the state have consistently done more with less, having served a growing population and increased need for services despite budget cuts and the pushback of per capita funding for the last four years. Further, libraries complied with the Building Lifelong Learners Act (BLLA) of 2020 by going fine free for youth without the accompanying increase in funding called for in the legislation. While this was the right thing to do – late fines posed a barrier to access for children and families – the lack of reimbursement for this lost revenue hampers libraries' ability to serve the public. For example, BCPL waived nearly \$520,000 in fines from 15,000 youth library cards. Reimbursement for BLLA could have been applied towards vital services, including the purchase a much needed replacement outreach vehicle for our Youth and Family Engagement department.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB 685 which provides adequate funding for BCPL and its initiatives, and 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 that reads 'Sonia Alcántara-Antoine'.

Sonia Alcántara-Antoine  
Director, Baltimore County Public Library



February 4, 2022

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

I am writing in support of SB 448 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.

Caroline County Public Library staff moved very quickly to continue to serve our citizens throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, even while our facilities were closed. This includes using CARES Act funding to start up a service 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. We are now providing some services virtually, offer curbside pick-up, and Books-By-Mail. Early in the pandemic, we started up a COVID-19 call center and staffed it for the Caroline County Health Department until we were able to re-open our facilities. 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.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debby Bennett, Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

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

Federsburg Branch  
123 Morris Avenue  
Federsburg, 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

1100 Green Valley Road  
New Windsor, MD 21776



CARROLL COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
*Infinite Possibilities*

410-386-4500 tel  
library.carr.org

Testimony in support of SB 448, Public Libraries – Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding

Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Tuesday, February 15 at 1 pm

Submitted by Andrea Berstler

Dear Committee Chair Guzzone and Distinguished Senators:

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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.

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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.

Committee Chair Guzzone and Distinguished Senators

Tuesday, February 15 at 1 pm

Page 2

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,

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

Legislative Officer, Maryland Library Association

**Budget and Taxation Committee**

**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

**February 15, 2022**

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

I am writing to ask for your **support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. This bill will extend critically needed 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.

While our services to the community may look different since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, our staff have never stopped working to support Cecil County citizens through the most challenging periods in our lifetime. We immediately used CARES Act and repositioned budget dollars to extend free public Wifi outside our buildings to students, teachers, and other community members, hosted hundreds of virtual learning programs, and created an online library card to ensure that all members of our community could access the library's resources for the period while our buildings were closed. We distributed hundreds of thousands of books and other materials through contactless pick-up, launched a home delivery service to the community's most vulnerable seniors, and got to work connecting struggling small business owners and non-profits with resources and information expertise to help them stay afloat. This past December, the Maryland Association of Counties recognized our library system's Business Information Center with the Innovation Champion Award for Rural Counties for the vital impact they have created in this arena.

In addition, our branch libraries became a powerful partner with our County Health Department. Our librarians called thousands of seniors who lack internet access to schedule vaccination appointments, hosted vaccination clinics, and most recently, served as the primary distributor for free rapid test-kits throughout the county. Our staff have courageously taken on these new duties at a time when Cecil County posts some of the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the state out of service and love for their community.

Finally, with no additional county support for operations or staffing, our library system opened its long-awaited new North East Branch Library in April 2021 to a community in desperate need of connection—both informational and technological as well as human. Since it's opening, this new state capital library grant support branch has welcomed more than 80,000 visitors, circulated hundreds of thousands of books and other learning materials, and hosted 2,610 study and meeting room users who have met, worked, and connected to create a better community for all.

Our commitment, dedication, and impact has been unwavering. If anything, it has grown substantially. Maryland's public library regionally library systems need your support to successfully meet expanded needs for services from their communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Miller, Executive Director



**Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**  
**February 15, 2022**  
**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

The Charles County Public Library has implemented new way to reach customers over the past two years in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Pivoted to virtual programming, expanded digital resources, and introduced curbside pickup of materials and remote printing service.
- 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
- Provided 24 hr. WiFi service in branch library parking lots.
- Launched the Imagination Library of Charles County in October 2021 (partnering with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library) to provide free books every month for all 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.
- Currently partnering with the Charles County Health Department to distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits and N95 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, numerous 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 for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

KennethWayne Thompson  
Executive Director  
Charles County Public Library



# DORCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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

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

## Budget and Taxation Committee

### SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

February 15, 2022

### Support

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

The Dorchester County Public Library continually strives to meet the needs of its community through new and innovative methods. This includes the circulation mobile hotspots, distribution of masks and COVID-19 test kits, virtual and take-home programming opportunities, ongoing curbside services, book and movie bundles, 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. Plans are even in place to provide a vaccine clinic in the Library's Meeting Room in the near future. 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 simply 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.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Director  
Dorchester County Public Library



ENOCH PRATT  
*free* LIBRARY

**Budget and Taxation Committee**

**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

**February 15, 2022**

**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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 for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to 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



FREDERICK  
COUNTY  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARIES

## Budget and Taxation Committee

### SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

February 15, 2022

#### Support

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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

#### Board of Trustees

Mick O'Leary  
Chair

Jenny D'Agostino  
Vice Chair

Karyn Spertzel  
Secretary

Galen Mayfield

Shemica Sheppard

Cheryl Smith

Suzette White

#### Director

James Kelly

#### Administrative Offices

110 East Patrick Street, Frederick, MD 21701

P 301.600.1613 F 301.600.3789 www.fcpl.org

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.

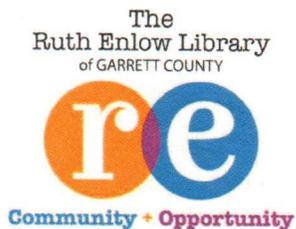
Finally, with the Frederick County Health Department, our team regularly assisted at vaccine clinics and we now host weekly vaccine clinics at four of our library branches. Additionally, just last week, our team distributed 3,000 test kits and over 95,000 KN95 masks.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448 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 black ink, appearing to read 'JK', is written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

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



Budget and Taxation Committee  
HB685/SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding  
**Support**

February 15, 2022

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

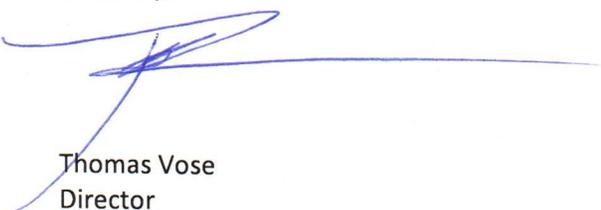
I would like to add my voice in support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding, which is intended to extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. This funding is a critical pillar of support for Library services in Garrett County specifically, in Western Maryland regionally, as well as throughout the State as a whole – especially with those services being more important to the community than ever.

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.

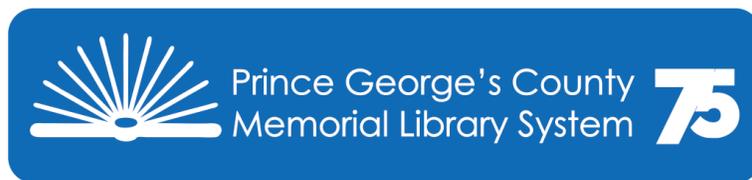
But we can't do it alone, and the Western Maryland Regional Library (WMRL) has been an invaluable support enabling our efforts. The delivery service they provide has welded together the Garrett, Allegany and Washington County library systems ensuring that patrons of any have access to all three collections. 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 your support of SB 448 which 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

### SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

February 15, 2022

#### Support

February 2, 2022

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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. We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448, which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Roberta Phillips  
Chief Executive Officer



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

### SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

February 15, 2022

#### Support

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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, first by offering online access to our services, then providing the means to get online by providing hotspots to facilitate connecting our students and remote workers to the internet. 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.

The Library has been fine free for our community since 2019 to remove any barriers to accessing library services. The Building Lifelong Learners Act has made it possible for the Library to keep materials fine free for our students and adults alike. 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.

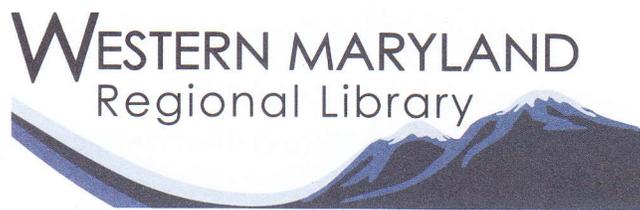
The Eastern Shore Regional Library, the shore's regional resource center, also provides needed services for our library. Without the support of our regional resource center, there would be no sharing of materials between public libraries on the eastern shore. Our regional provides the vehicle and drivers 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 for your support of SB 448 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Janet Salazar

Director



Budget and Taxation Committee

**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

February 15, 2022

**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of SB 448 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.

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. 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 back the passage of SB 448.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth M. Hulett".

Elizabeth M. Hulett

Director

Western Maryland Regional Library

**Amendment SB0448-673227-01.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FWA



**SB0448/673227/1**

AMENDMENTS  
PREPARED  
BY THE  
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE  
SERVICES

10 FEB 22  
08:52:30

BY: Senator King

(To be offered in the Budget and Taxation Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 448

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, in line 19, after “For” insert “EACH OF”; in the same line, strike “year” and substitute “YEARS”; in the same line, after “2022” insert “AND 2023”; and in lines 21, 23, 25, 27, and 29, strike “2023”, “2024”, “2025”, “2026”, and “2027”, respectively, and substitute “2024”, “2025”, “2026”, “2027”, and “2028”, respectively.

# **King Sponsor Testimony SB448.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FWA

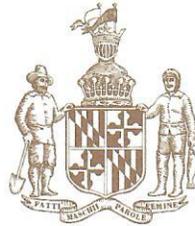
NANCY J. KING  
*Legislative District 39*  
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Chair*

Education, Business and  
Administration Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 120  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3686 · 410-841-3686  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3686  
Fax 301-858-3670 · 410-841-3670  
Nancy.King@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SPONSOR STATEMENT**

**Senate Bill 488 – Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**

February 15, 2022

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Our public libraries are far more than a place to get a book. Libraries are community centers that serve as places of learning, professional development, healthcare, human interaction, access, intellectual freedom, and so much more. Libraries are free public spaces that allow everyone to feel safe and to find opportunity. And throughout the COVID pandemic, our libraries have continued to serve our residents with added services like curbside pickup, ebooks and publications and as distribution centers for COVID test kits and masks.

Our libraries are level funded for FY 2022 and 2023. Senate Bill 448 with amendments will give our libraries a much needed increase in funding over the next four fiscal years. Regional resource centers will see an increase from the current \$8.75 to \$11.17 per resident of the area served by FY2027. Local libraries will increase from the current \$17.10 to \$20.00 by FY2027.

These increases will ensure that our libraries have the resources necessary to adequately provide the services that our residents need and deserve. Now, more than ever, we need these vital American institutions, and now, more than ever, these institutions need our help.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 448 with amendments.

# **SB 448 Regional Resource Centers and Libraries-Fun**

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO



# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN  
*Governor*

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD  
*Lieutenant Governor*

DAVID R. BRINKLEY  
*Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

## **SENATE BILL 448 Education - Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding (King)**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE: February 15, 2022**

**COMMITTEE: Senate Budget & Taxation**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 448 increases the mandated minimum per resident funding formula amounts for both library regional resource centers and county library aid as follows: regional library centers from \$8.75 to \$9.19 in FY 2023 and incremental increases up to \$11.17 in FY 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter; and library program (capital and operating) from \$17.10 to \$17.78 in FY 24 and incremental increases up to \$20 in FY 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

**EXPLANATION:** The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the growth in the fiscal impact of \$10 million by FY 2028. The FY 2023 Budget includes \$8.5 million for regional resource centers and \$43.6 million in county library formula aid. Library aid was last increased during the 2021 Session (Ch. 6/27).

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which will require spending allocations for FY 2024 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2022.

Changes to the Maryland Constitution in 2020 provide the General Assembly with additional budgetary authority, beginning in the 2023 Session, to realign total spending by increasing and adding items to appropriations in the budget submitted by the Governor. The legislature's new budgetary power diminishes, if not negates, the need for mandated appropriation bills.

Fully funding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan) will require fiscal discipline in the years ahead, if the State is to maintain the current projected structural budget surpluses. Mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of this education funding priority and the Governor's tax relief proposals.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19. High rates of inflation and workforce shortages may be short lived or persist, thereby impacting the Maryland economy. While current budget forecasts project structural surpluses, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability. The Department continues to urge the General Assembly to focus on maintaining the structural budget surplus.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at (410) 260-6371  
or [barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov)**

45 Calvert Street · Annapolis, MD 21401-1907

Tel: 410-260-7041 · Fax: 410-974-2585 · Toll Free: 1-800-705-3493 · TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay

<http://dbm.maryland.gov>