



January 18, 2022

To: Paul Pinsky, Chair, Maryland's Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB 108: Supporting

Dear Chairman Pinsky and distinguished member of the Committee,

I am writing to you in support of SB108, which would provide support for Charles County Public Library to support its community through the Imagination Library (<https://imaginationlibrary.com/>).

This is a great "book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income." It is well-established and has already provided over 172 million books internationally. Children at an age vital for creating a habit of life-time learning will receive a free book each. While all children will benefit, this program would especially benefit children in less economically advantaged families. Many of these children may not have a book of their own. One of the great blessings of my time working in libraries has been to see the joy that such children have when they do get books. They want to read the books over and over, ask their parents to read with them, and develop the excitement in reading that is the foundation of much later academic achievement.

Study after study shows that the greatest brain growth occurs in our early years, that children who speak with and read with their parents have a huge advantage in learning, and that early childhood development fosters a lifetime of success (<https://ferstreaders.org/resources/fifty-top-literacy-statistics>). Your support of this bill will ensure that all children in Charles County have that advantage, building success for themselves, their county, and Maryland. I strongly encourage you to support this bill. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further testimony.

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

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
Leonardtown, MD 20650
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