

**SB0438-EHE\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 438**

*Young Readers Programs – Establishment  
(Young Readers Program Expansion Act)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental  
Affairs Committee

Date: February 16, 2022

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 438. This bill would solidify the Baltimore City Young Readers Program in partnership with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and would create a mechanism for other jurisdictions to establish their own affiliate programs to support the learning and growth of young readers around the state.

Since its establishment in 2016, the Baltimore City Young Readers Program has successfully provided free, high-quality literature and resources to thousands of Baltimore children under the age of 5 and their families, regardless of the families' income status. The program has proved beneficial for Baltimore's children in many ways, including improving literacy levels, increasing parent-child interaction, and better preparing children before they enter school.

SB 438 permanently solidifies the Baltimore City Young Readers Program by providing an annual budget allocation to support the program so that it can continue to do this good work for Baltimore's kids. Importantly, the bill would also aid other local jurisdictions in establishing affiliate Young Readers Programs through the creation of a matching grant fund to help offset the costs of setting up and implementing the program.

All counties share in the goals of encouraging reading in young children, deepening literacy, and preparing kids to be successful in school. Counties pursue these goals in a variety of ways, including through the support of our local systems of public education, and through community partnerships. SB 438 would expand counties' resources to pursue these goals. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 438 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

# **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 438.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cory McCray

Position: FAV

CORY V. McCRAY  
Legislative District 45  
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Subcommittees*

Vice Chair, Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,  
and Environment



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 221  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3165 · 301-858-3165  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3165  
Cory.Mccray@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 438**

**Young Readers Programs – Establishment (Young Readers Program Expansion Act)**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I write to urge you to **support** Senate Bill 438. Establishing programs, like the Baltimore City Young Readers Program and Young Readers Matching Grant Program, are invaluable investments into the education and enlightenment of our State's youth.

Reading, at a young age, is fundamentally important and a foundational part of education. Under Senate Bill 438, there is instruction to establish the Baltimore City Young Readers Program. This program would lie under the Division of Children and Youth, which is within the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. The bill requires that the program be administered by the Deputy Director of Division to ensure its success. Essentially, the Young Readers Program will gift books, by mail, to children throughout Baltimore City. In essence, this program creates an imaginary library and provides youth with access to high-quality books for their own edification and entertainment. To bolster this effort, Senate Bill 438 also provides for the establishment of the Young Readers Matching Grant Program—which will provide matching grants in support of supplying and operating the book-gifting program.

In gifting books to children throughout the City of Baltimore, this program will open doors many positive possibilities—benefitting interested youth, working families, and our communities. It is an investment into the future, and a present initiative that will provide thousands of children with access to foundational resources.

If enacted, Senate Bill 438 will take effect on October 1, 2022, and will require the adoption of new practices in accordance with the change in law.

In support of Baltimore's young readers, I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 438.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory V. McCray', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cory V. McCray  
State Senator, 45<sup>th</sup> District

# **Bright Minds SB 438 Letter of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Van Kirk

Position: FAV



February 15, 2022

The Honorable Cory V. McCray  
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 221  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator McCray and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Bright Minds Foundation, the Howard County public schools education foundation, strongly supports Senate Bill 438: Young Readers Program Expansion Act. SB 438 will provide matching grant funds for the expansion of programs that provide books to young children in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The qualifying program in Howard County, **Read With Me**, is administered by Bright Minds Foundation.

Howard County has approximately 20,000 children between the ages of 0 and 5 years. In our county and elsewhere, there remain persistent challenges with children who, regardless of socioeconomic status, are not receiving appropriate literacy exposure prior to kindergarten. Children's success with school readiness begins at home almost from birth, and delays in the early years of education are difficult to overcome. Access to age-appropriate books early on has both immediate and long-term positive effects on children's vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills. Unfortunately, many children lack adequate access to reading materials and adult support for reading.

As the Howard County affiliate for Imagination Library, Bright Minds brings **Read With Me** each year to more than 1,000 children, with a particular focus on low-income and high-need children in our community. Participating children receive one high-quality, age-appropriate book mailed monthly to their home through age 5. This early support aligns closely with state and county goals for early childhood support and will have far-reaching benefits for participating children, their families, and our county. If implemented widely, programs like **Read With Me** will reduce spending on intervention/ remediation, create economic advantages with improved skills for future employment, and decrease the number of students who drop out of school. Student civility, self-discipline, and social emotional skills will also improve.

Many more children could benefit from this program and Bright Minds would love to offer the program to a larger segment of children in our county. We have the staff, experience, and community partnerships needed to quickly and effectively expand this program in Howard County.

We sincerely hope committee members will support this bill. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require anything additional from us.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Van Kirk*

Jennifer Van Kirk  
Executive Director  
Bright Minds Foundation

**(MSC) SB438 Testimony (FAV).pdf**

Uploaded by: Jon DiPietro

Position: FAV



# MARYLAND STUDENT COALITION

JON DIPIETRO, DIRECTOR  
HUNTER CRAIG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

CHRIS LIDARD, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
LAUREN RASKIN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
VINAY KHOSLA, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

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## TESTIMONY

**BILL:** Senate Bill (SB) 483 - Young Readers Programs - Establishment (Young Readers Program Expansion Act)

**SPONSOR:** Senator McCray, *Baltimore City (45)*

**POSITION:** **FAVORABLE**

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Monday, January 17, 2022

### SB 483: Favorable

*The Maryland Student Coalition is an entirely student-led, advocacy group that serves to bring students together to promote education policy reform. Founded in 2020 as a vehicle for advocating for students' right to demonstrate, our scope has since expanded to include more educational advocacy initiatives. You can learn more at [marylandstudents.org](http://marylandstudents.org)*

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. We are writing in favor of Senate Bill 483.

Senate Bill (SB) 483 - Young Readers Programs - Establishment (Young Readers Program Expansion Act), will establish the Baltimore City Young Readers Program to mail free, and high-quality, books to children and establishing the Young Readers Matching Grant Program to provide matching grants to counties to support the establishment and operation of certain book-gifting services.

SB 483 takes necessary and important strides to increasing free access to literature for Maryland's youth. The US Department of Education (DOE) has determined that currently Baltimore City has an average annual circulation of 1-10 library materials per student. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) stated, in relation to the data provided by the DOE, that students who report having more books in their homes performed better academically while only 15% of those who only consumed 1-10 reading materials annually scored proficiently in 2015. This indicates increased access to reading materials bolsters literacy: an important benchmark of the efficacy of the Maryland education system.

It is the duty of the State of Maryland to support programs such as the Young Readers Program as a continued commitment to the educational progress and advancement of Maryland's students.

The Maryland Student Coalition supports the principles within the legislation and strongly encourages issuing a **favorable** report on SB 483.

# **SB 438-Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV

**Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County**

**P.O. Box 5, North East, Maryland 21901**

**Website: <https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/affilitate/MDCECIL/>**

**To: The Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,**

**Re: Senate Bill 438, Young Readers Program - Expansion Act**

**Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,**

**I am the leader of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County, which was established in September 2019. Our small group of hard-working volunteers started with only 22 registrations that first year, and we're proud to have 716 local children receiving books this month, less than two and a half years later.**

**Cecil County, MD has approximately 5,800 residents under the age of five. Our goal for 2022 is to increase our registration to cover 20% of these children, or about 1,160 books going out each month. To do so, we must register more than 400 new preschoolers before the end of the year, almost doubling the size of our impact on our community.**

**Our 2022 action plan reflects the steps we need to reach this goal. We have three registration events scheduled. The first will be this spring in Conowingo, and we're securing locations for events in the summer and fall. Historically, we register between 25 and 50 new kids per event. We also register an average of 25 children each month from forms mailed to us in response to our regular canvassing on social media.**

**We can reach the children; we know that. The unknown variable is: "Will we receive enough in donations to fund the goal?"**

**Our volunteers spend their time planning and manning registration events, publicizing the program, bookkeeping, and all the other administrative tasks required to run any organization. But it's the fundraising that allows us to get more books into the hands of more children.**

**Matching funds will help us reach our goal this year, without a doubt. Our action plan includes a letter campaign to our past donors, and we'd love to be able to incentivize them with a match.**

**Receiving funds that support accelerated growth will also help us attract more volunteers to our ranks. They will see DPIL of Cecil County continue our path of growth and will add to our local impact. This year we added an Event Planner to our team and also increased our social media presence, doubling our online following.**

**We are poised to continue the growth that this proven program deserves, and we're passionate about helping Maryland develop young readers.**

**Sincerely,**

**Donna Bitely, Main Coordinator  
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County**

# **SB 438-Dollywood Foundation-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV



**Board of Directors**

*Dolly Parton*  
Chairperson

*Ted Miller*  
Vice Chairperson

*David Dotson*  
Chief Executive Officer

*Jeff Conyers*  
President

*Craig Ross*  
Vice President/Secretary

*Ken Bell*  
Treasurer

*Jo Blalock*

*Jane Cooper*

*Charles W. Kite*

*Edna Rogers*

111 Dollywood Lane  
Pigeon Forge, TN  
37863

(865) 428-9606

February 2022

Hello! Members of the Committee, I am writing to support a favorable review for the Young Readers Program Expansion Act (HB 383/SB 438).

As Executive Director of The Dollywood Foundation, I know advancing literacy skills for children from birth is paramount to the lives of Maryland children and families. Reading is the key for lifelong learning and the single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success in school, work, and life in general.

Brain science tell us that baby's brain rapidly grows before entering school with 90% developed by age 4. If we wait till children enter kindergarten for exposure to books and reading - it is too late. The Reading Network in children's brains does not naturally exist; it is built by reading. Reading at home requires books - this is where we can help!

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library inspires family reading, is community-based to drive ownership, and is designed to improve the lives of children at scale.

For over 27 years, The Dollywood Foundation annually contributes several million dollars to make the Imagination Library available, covering expenses such as administrative, operational, database management, marketing, training, technical assistance and more. Shared costs model keeps local program costs down to only reduced wholesale book and mailing and local administrative expenses. The state match grant as proposed in the bill will financially help the local affiliate programs and allow them to increase service to more children.

Simply getting books into the home changes the trajectory of kids, families, and communities. This program is big impact with low cost, low effort, and low risk.

["Create a love for books and reading - give every child the start they need in education and life"](#)

Thank you for considering expanding the Young Readers Program. The Dollywood Foundation is ready to support and assist Maryland children from birth to 5 years old have access to high-quality, age-appropriate books at no cost to families.

Kindly,  
  
Nora Briggs  
The Dollywood Foundation

# **SB 438-Imagination Library of Wheaton Woods-FAV.pd**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV

February 16, 2022

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, Members of the Committee,

My name is Helen Winder, and I am the head of the Imagination Library of Wheaton Woods Elementary School PTA affiliate. I am writing to express my support of the Maryland Senate Bill 438, Young Readers Program - Enhancement Act.

Wheaton Woods ES is a Title 1 school in the 20853 zip code of Rockville, MD. Our catchment area is culturally and socioeconomically diverse; of just over 500 students: 25.5% are African American, 63.6% are Hispanic, 4.2% are Caucasian, 4.8% are Asian, and 51.08% are limited English proficient. Over 80% of our students qualify for free and reduced meals. As you can gather, our families are coming from traditionally underserved populations. **We are now at 124 enrolled and 52 “graduates” of the Imagination Library program.**

We started our Imagination Library affiliate in June 2020, completely virtually as schools in Montgomery County had already shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Reaching our families has been difficult during this time of limited face-to-face engagement. Our neighborhood does best with personal interaction, in-person conversations, and paper registration forms and those options have been impossible or severely curtailed during much of our affiliate's existence, but I am proud of what we have accomplished so far. Our affiliate has conducted several impact surveys, and parents and caregivers have consistently said that they have noticed that since participating in the Imagination Library program, they are reading more with their children, and they have reported that their children are showing more interest in books, as well as showing development in pre-reading skills such as listening and word recognition. Additionally, almost all the parents and caregivers reported that the Imagination Library program was very important during the pandemic; while our community does have a wonderful public library close by, it was closed for months during the beginning of the pandemic. Receiving new books in the mail became something that our participating families treasured during periods of lockdown and quarantine. And over the next few years, Wheaton Woods ES will be welcoming 130+ children to its PreK and Headstart programs that will have already begun their journeys as lifelong readers thanks to the Imagination Library Program.



However, there is so much more we can do. I also work at Wheaton Woods ES as one of the Parent Community Coordinators, and on a daily basis I see or hear about so many younger siblings that I know are not yet enrolled in the Imagination Library program. Support such as that provided by the Young Readers Program - Expansion Act would help us reach our goal of expanding our program to **at least** 200 active children.

We are also constantly approached by families in neighboring school catchment areas who are hoping to enroll their children in an Imagination Library program affiliate. While our current funding source specifies that children must live within the Wheaton Woods ES catchment areas, it would be wonderful if in the future our affiliate could serve more of our neighbors. Another option would be setting up affiliates at neighboring schools; several have approached us for information on how to do so.

Members of the Committee, once again, thank you for your support of the Maryland Senate Bill 438, Young Readers Program - Enhancement Act.

Sincerely,  
Helen Winder

# **SB 438-Maryland Department of Budget and Operation**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV



# 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 438 Young Readers Programs – Establishment (McCray)**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE:** February 10, 2022

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Health,  
and Environmental Affairs Committee

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 438 establishes the Baltimore City Young Readers Program and the Young Readers Matching Grant Program within the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS) for the other 23 jurisdictions, the purpose of which is to mail books to children from birth to school age, without regard to family income. The bill mandates annual appropriations in the amount of \$200,000 for the Baltimore City Program and \$500,000 for the 23 other jurisdictions.

**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 mandated appropriation provisions. The Administration began funding the Young Readers Program in GOCPYVS during the 2015-2018 term. GOCPYVS utilizes a portion of the Children Cabinet Interagency Funds in the Maryland State Department of Education's budget to support the program. The FY 2022 amount is approximately \$200,000. It is anticipated that a similar amount will be available for this purpose in FY 2023.

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.mar.vland.gov>

**SB 438-Michele Walker-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV

February 16, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, Members of the Committee,

I am writing to support SB 438 – Young Readers Expansion Act. This bill suggests that matching funds for existing Dolly Patron Imagination Library affiliates in the state of Maryland be provided. If approved, this bill would provide much needed funds to DPIL affiliates.

The Imagination Library of Allegany County has been in existence for ten years. In those ten years we have witnessed 3,805 children graduate from the program, mailed more than 223,104 books to registered children and currently are serving 1,921 children. A great number of children registered are from low-income families and receive books through our program that they may not otherwise receive. Matching funds to our program would allow us to continue to provide books to those children already registered and could expand our ability to register more children. We have a goal of 2,000 or more children receiving books monthly.

As the Executive Director of County United Way, Inc., I know how important early childhood education is to the success of children in school. As the lead organization and program administrator of the Imagination Library of Allegany County, I know how important it is to be able to go to the underserved areas of our County to sign children up for this program. SB 438 would provide the opportunity to us to provide expanded services to the underserved population in our community.

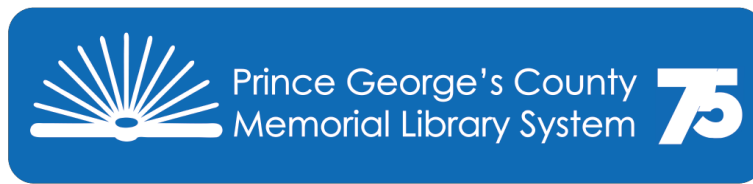
Please support SB 438 so that we can help level the playing field for all the children in the state of Maryland. Thank you for your consideration.

**Michele** Michele Walker  
Executive Director  
County United Way, Inc.  
113 A South Centre Street  
Cumberland, MD 21502  
301-722-2700  
Serving Allegany & Garrett Counties, MD and Hampshire & Mineral Counties, WV

# **SB 438-Prince George's County Memorial Library Sys**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV



**Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental  
Affairs Committee**

**SB 438 - Young Readers Programs – Establishment (Young  
Readers Program Expansion Act)**

**February 16, 2022 Hearing  
Support**

February 16, 2022

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) in **support of SB 438 Education – Young Readers Programs – Establishment (Young Readers Program Expansion Act)**. The bill will provide essential support to Maryland's public libraries, including PGCMLS, for advancing early literacy and kindergarten readiness for young Marylanders (from birth to age 5).

PGCMLS's existing Dolly Parton Imagination Library program is called **Books from Birth**. The program launched in July 2017 with funding from the Library's operating budget that was designated by then-Prince George's County Executive, Rushern Baker. This program encourages parents and caregivers to talk, sing, share books and play with their very young children to prepare them for school and life. Having books in the home has a strong effect on children's educational attainment even above and beyond such factors as education level of the parents and parental occupation. Ensuring that a child has just twenty books still has a significant impact on a young child's later success in school, but our program goes beyond that minimum threshold.<sup>i</sup> If a parent registers their child shortly after birth, the child can receive up to sixty free books for their home library. Families can bond over sharing books together. Even if a parent or caregiver cannot read, simply talking about the pictures and making up stories to go with the pictures allows them to be a big part of their child's future success.

**Growing Books from Birth's Impact**

Over the past four and a half years, PGCMLS has reached over 23,000 children under the age of five with existing local Books from Birth funding.

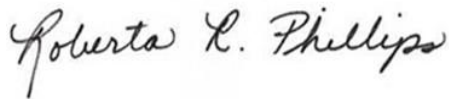
- Prince George's County families have received 480,000 free books.
- 8,583 children have "graduated"/aged out of the program and around 2,000 have moved out of our county.
- Currently, 13,000 children are actively receiving free books on a monthly basis.

As PGCMLS continue to reach a growing population of children (the 2020 Census indicates that Prince George's County is home to 62,800+ children under age 5,) and more children register for our program, the support from Prince George's County has not been able to increase to accommodate the growing number of books required to be sent out monthly. In fact, our local budget has been cut because of budget austerity measures. **The state funding proposed under SB 438 will allow PGCMLS to continue to keep up with the growing demand for more books as more families register. It will also help other public library systems in Maryland establish or grow their similar programs.** PGCMLS and Maryland's libraries wish to continue to be a positive force in strengthening children and their families through bonding over books.

I invite you to watch an interview [with Tiffany](#), a dedicated mother of two children from Prince George's County. Tiffany shares how her two year old Isaiah has recently started pointing to the pictures in the book, "Truck Stop". As he points, she identifies the types of trucks for him. Since this was a recent development in his interaction with books, she is excited to share with him and use different voices for different characters. Isaiah is learning print awareness, vocabulary, letter recognition, sound awareness and is bonding with his mother. His older sister, Gabriella often joins in sharing books together. This is a wonderful example of how parents are their child's first and best teacher, as well as how older siblings play an important role. (See wonderful interaction between Mom and son at 1 min 50s)

Thank you for considering this important bill that will continue to address the opportunity gap for young Marylanders. If our children get extra support for developing their literacy skills they will have a greater chance of succeeding in school and pursuing their dreams. Please feel free to contact me at [roberta.phillips@pgcmls.info](mailto:roberta.phillips@pgcmls.info) if I may be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roberta L. Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'R' and 'P'.

Roberta Phillips  
Chief Executive Officer

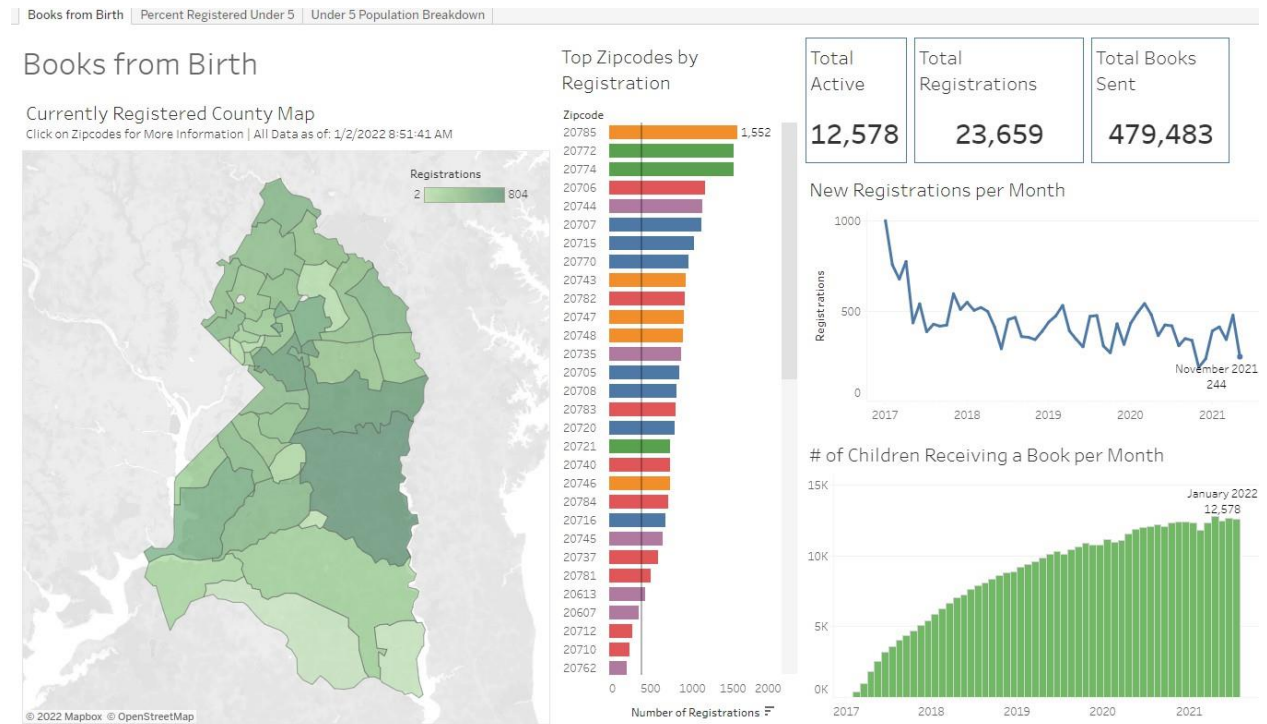


# APPENDIX

## Resident Testimonials

- “Our kids love receiving the books monthly!”
- “Thank you so much for sending books to our son since he was a baby. He has loved reading each one of them.”
- “We love our imagination library books!”
- “We are all really enjoying the books you select each month and greatly appreciate this service. Thank you so, so much. As a fellow librarian, I am especially grateful to you for all you do!!!”
- “We appreciated the program while we were using it, so thank you for this service! I have recommended it to fellow parents as well.”
- “My children love these books and I appreciate this program.”
- “Our son looks forward to reading new books so much.”
- “We did love the books that our daughter received through this program -- many continue to be her favorites now.”

## PGCMLS Books from Birth Data Dashboard (February 2022)



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<sup>i</sup> University of Nevada, Reno. (2010, May 21). Books in home as important as parents' education in determining children's education level. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved February 4, 2022 from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100520213116.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100520213116.htm))

**SB 438-Queen Anne's County Library-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Marc Korman

Position: FAV



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

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

**Ways and Means Committee**  
**SB 438 Young Readers Program – Expansion Act**  
**February 16, 2022**  
**Support**

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB 438: Young Readers Program – Expansion Act. As the Director of the Queen Anne’s County Library I have first-hand knowledge of the impact participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has on a child’s ability to enter school ready to learn. In 2018 we were fortunate to partner with our local Judy Center to provide access to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for our under 5 population. The impact was significant. In the 2017/2018 school year, 48% of Queen Anne’s County children entered kindergarten ready to learn. Just one year later, after implementing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, 57% of Queen Anne’s County children entered kindergarten ready to learn, an increase of 18.75%. Studies show that the single most important activity parents can do to get their children ready to read and learn is to read out loud them. The number of words a child knows upon entering school is a key indicator of future school success. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library puts the books into the hands of parents so they can model reading as a behavior and increase their children’s vocabulary. During the pandemic, when schools were closed to students, this service was needed more than ever.

The cost of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library can be a detriment to libraries being able to participate. For every child enrolled in the program, the cost is \$25 per year until the child ages out at 5 years old. Committing to the program means making hard decisions about other services that may not have resources to continue. The funding in this bill will be crucial to our ability to continue to provide this program. Currently, we are fortunate enough to get a small grant from the Queen Anne’s County Commissioners to help support our program. In FY 2022 that funding is \$11,000, but the cost of the program each year has been between \$20,000 and \$24,000. The 50% matching funds would ensure that this valuable service would continue for our residents.

I ask the committee to support SB 438 so that all Maryland Public Libraries will have this funding available to support participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library statewide.

Sincerely,

Janet Salazar  
Director  
Queen Anne’s County Library

# **Testimony (Senate) Imagination Library of Montgome**

Uploaded by: Susan Greif

Position: FAV



**Testimony on Behalf of SB 483 - Young Readers Program Expansion Act  
Senate Education, Health and Environment Affairs Committee  
February 16, 2022**

Thank you Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair and members of the committee for this chance to speak in favor of the bill.

I'm Susan Greif, president of Imagination Library of Montgomery County.

Our affiliate is 7 years old, has served over 2,200 children and distributed over 40,000 books. in 7 county zip codes.

Several years ago, a mother sent us a note of thanks. She said she didn't have much to give, but wanted to contribute. \$2 was included.

Her sentiments stuck with us, because there are undoubtedly many stories like hers.....  
...too many households that have few or no books.

The situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Many children < 5 with no vaccine have limited access to libraries and other places with books.

And even in the best of times, many parents lack the time, money or transportation to provide this access.

We know this leads to deficits in social, emotional and academic development, early literacy and kindergarten readiness. These challenges are NOT going away.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library books have continued to arrive... one book every month...that is age-appropriate and comes to the child's mailbox in their name. Just \$2.10/month.

In Montgomery County, we have enrolled about 2% of eligible children. But we want include so many more. And we need your help, by providing access to additional funds through a matching grant program.

I'll bet you can vividly remember your favorite children's book and the time you spent reading with your family.

THIS is the power of books, and Dolly Parton tells us - Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More.

We also urge a favorable report. Thank you.

# **SB 438 Young Readers Programs - Establishment (McC**

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO





# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

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## SENATE BILL 438 Young Readers Programs - Establishment (McCray)

### STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

**DATE:** February 16, 2022

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 438 establishes the Baltimore City Young Readers Program and the Young Readers Matching Grant Program within the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS) for the other 23 jurisdictions, the purpose of which is to mail books to children from birth to school age, without regard to family income. The bill mandates annual appropriations in the amount of \$200,000 for the Baltimore City Program and \$500,000 for the 23 other jurisdictions.

**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 mandated appropriation provisions. The Administration began funding the Young Readers Program in GOCPYVS during the 2015-2018 term. GOCPYVS utilizes a portion of the Children Cabinet Interagency Funds in the Maryland State Department of Education's budget to support the program. The FY 2022 amount is approximately \$200,000. It is anticipated that a similar amount will be available for this purpose in FY 2023.

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)**

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