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Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

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

March 24, 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, e-books 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 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.