



Ways and Means Committee

SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 22, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, 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, a growth of 54% over FY19. Practically overnight libraries had to pivot to an online only model and each Regional Library in the state was crucial to its success. Overall WMRL provided over \$1,159,000.00 of support to the three county library systems in Western

Maryland. Without this support the citizens of Western Maryland would be at a distinct disadvantage compared to the more populous counties in the state.

The Maryland legislature has demonstrated over time its support of libraries and the critical role they play in the education and overall welfare of their communities. We ask that you continue this support during these extraordinary times when the citizens of Maryland need our services more than ever and back the passage of SB 448.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth M. Hulett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Elizabeth M. Hulett
Director
Western Maryland Regional Library



Ways and Means Committee

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

Dear Distinguished Committee Members,

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

This bill extends per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will support your community by allowing for library services, especially as libraries aid in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 42,000 regular card holders and 18,200 Kids Card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

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

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

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

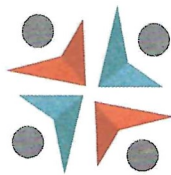
HB 685 also provides support for regional libraries, including the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SRMLA) that serves St. Mary's. Established to help ensure that state funding is spread throughout less populous counties, SMRLA is vital to our work, providing training, our email system,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

Thank you for your past support of libraries and for supporting SB 448! You help us make the difference.

Sincerely,

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
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WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Testimony in support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
Hearings before the Ways and Means Committee

March 24, 2022

Submitted by Jenny Bakos, Executive Director
Washington County Free Library

Dear Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington 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.

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

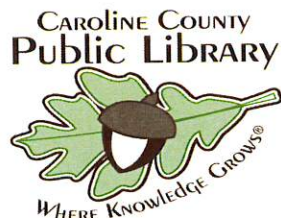
The Washington County Free Library is a life line to community members who are seeking employment, looking for safe-spaces after school, free internet access and opportunities to expand their horizons. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted this life line, as we pivoted to provide more services (within a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

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

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

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

Jenny L. Bakos
Executive Director
Washington County Free Library



Ways and Means Committee
SB448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
March 24, 2022
Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, 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 fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debby Bennett, Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

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

Federalsburg Branch
123 Morris Avenue
Federalsburg, Maryland 21632
p 410.754.8397 f 410.754.3058

North County Branch
101 Cedar Lane • P.O. Box 336
Greensboro, Maryland 21639
p 410.482.2173 f 410.482.2634



Southern Maryland

Regional Library Association, Inc.

Advancing Library Excellence

Ways and Means Committee

SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, 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.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 114,883 regular card holders and 54,295 kids card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

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.

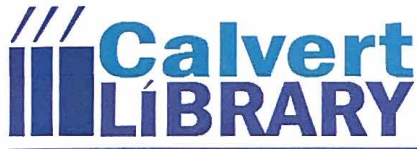
Once the public libraries were able to reopen safely, we dedicated over \$220,000 to support the implementation of radio frequency identification (RFID). This project allows customers to check out materials without staff intervention and also helps library staff expedite checking in materials once they 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 that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle, CEO



inspiring possibility ✦ calvertlibrary.info

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

Ways and Means Committee

SB448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries, especially as we play a key role in aiding our communities' recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 50,000 regular card holders and 24,500 Kids Card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

By late spring of 2020, Calvert Library was producing online storytime and other virtual programming, hosting zoom meetings for community organizations, providing Wi-Fi access in our parking lots and had hotspots on-order. We carefully spent CARES Act and ARPA funding on hotspots and Chromebooks to help bridge the digital divide. Our staff never stopped assisting customers with digital literacy, teaching users how to use downloadable materials, Zoom and Teams, apply for jobs online, and find vaccine appointments and testing info. Teachers relied on their students' special Calvert Library student card for access to downloadable books, trustworthy information and primary source material; especially when they were learning remotely. Thanks to our Health Department, we have provided clear information and supportive services like safe business reopening, vaccine appointments and free test-kits.

Usage of downloadable content nearly doubled during the pandemic; Southern MD Regional Library Association (SMRLA) was able to fund these collections at a higher rate to try and meet demand. Your support of SB448 will ensure Maryland's regional libraries can continue providing these important digital services in addition to necessary training, IT, technical services, and material delivery. Without the support of our Regional Library Calvert Library would not be able to meet our community's needs without significant cuts to our current public service.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie Willson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carrie Willson
Executive Director



ENOCH PRATT
free LIBRARY

Budget and Taxation Committee

HB 685 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Heidi Daniel

Chief Executive Officer

Enoch Pratt Free Library



Ways and Means Committee

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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

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Director

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Administrative Offices

110 East Patrick Street, Frederick, MD 21701

P 301.600.1613 F 301.600.3789 www.fcpl.org



FREDERICK
COUNTY
**PUBLIC
LIBRARIES**

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Board of Trustees

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Ways and Means Committee

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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 critical work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees and the 9,282 regular card holders which is almost half of our county population, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

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

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

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

As one of the smallest counties in Maryland, we could not be as successful without the support of the Eastern Shore Regional Library. We respectfully ask that you fund regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain our pivotal role in our communities. They have provided funding for vital staff training, material delivery services to all eight counties on the shore, and expanded access to e-book collections. At this time, we respectfully request that the committee fund public and regional libraries which will allow us to continue to grow our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

V/R,

Arnessa Dowell
KCPL Executive Director



**BALTIMORE COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Ways and Means Committee

SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, 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.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 273,241 adult card holders and 157,240 juvenile card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

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.

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

Sincerely,

Sonia Alcántara-Antoine
Director, Baltimore County Public Library

Ways and Means Committee**SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding****March 24, 2022****Support**

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, 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.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 41,000+ card holders and 5,200+ Kids Card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

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

- Pivoted to virtual programming, expanded digital resources, introduced curbside pickup of materials, and offered 24 hr. WiFi service in branch parking lots
- Reduced barriers to library services by going fine-free for all users in April 2021
- Increased our number of mobile hotspots for checkout to address the digital divide.
- Added Chromebook/hotspot bundles for checkout
- Launched the Imagination Library of Charles County in October 2021 to provide free books every month for 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 KN95 face masks to the community.

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

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 448 which will fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

KennethWayne Thompson
Executive Director



Dana Newman
Director

100 West Dover Street
Easton, MD 21601

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Fax
410-820-8217

Ways and Means Committee

SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

February 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY27. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities, especially as libraries aid in recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of the Talbot County Free Library Board (TCFL) of Library Trustees, our over 27,000 card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

During the pandemic, the Talbot County Free Library (TCFL) has become a lifeline for residents and visitors; helping people to find vital resources, programming or services that support healing, learning and personal growth. Library staff and volunteers have been dedicated to helping people in our community to find jobs, file for unemployment, find vital healthcare information, and enrich their lives by learning something new in a virtual program or in just the right book or resource. The library has also provided much needed resources and innovative outreach during the last two years including COVID-19 test kits and KN95; citizenship study materials to the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center; giving free books to youth organizations; adding a Spanish language collection to the Detention Center; and bringing early literacy programs out into the community.

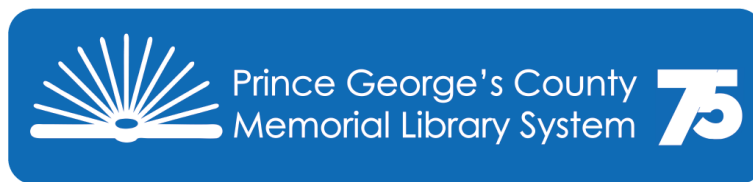
TCFL has been instrumental in connecting students and remote workers to the internet via its Wi-Fi hotspot lending program. Many Talbot County residents, similar to other rural counties in Maryland, have a need for Internet connectivity, as they either do not have a reliable Internet connection or have no connection at all. In 2022, we have already seen the library offer new technology to aid in local efforts toward equity of internet access. In January, the library added 50 new Wi-Fi hotspots for circulation with Emergency Connectivity funding and has developed a grant-funded project to add free Community Wi-Fi access in the town of Trappe. While these projects are grant funded for the current year, the library will need to find funding to continue providing the data for the Wi-Fi hotspots as our budget is strained with additional costs associated with providing services during the Pandemic.

The Eastern Shore Regional Library provides vital guidance, development, grant support, delivery of materials between shore libraries, and funding to the eight library systems that it serves. Without its support during the Pandemic, public libraries across the Eastern Shore would not have been able to provide as many resources and services as we have to our communities.

Libraries and regional resource centers are critical to providing support to the public during times of hardship, like the COVID-19 pandemic, and are instrumental in helping with economic recovery. 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,

Dana Newman
Library Director



Ways and Means Committee

SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 22, 2022

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Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, 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.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 750,000+ active card holders, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

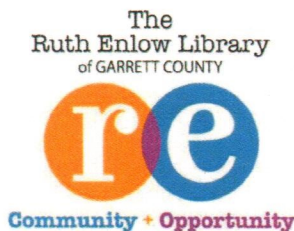
Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) continues to swiftly adapt its services to meet the needs of our community. Our national award-winning Workforce and Community Development program provides job readiness resources, programs, and support for Prince George's County residents. We worked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

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

Our libraries are embedded in and serve our diverse communities like no other entity. We continue to fill the critical demand for services by job seekers, small business owners, students, and Marylanders of all ages. Maryland's public libraries and regional resource centers have always been responsible stewards of our state per capita funding, consistently doing more with less. I respectfully ask for your support of SB 448, which will allow Maryland's libraries to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Roberta Phillips
Chief Executive Officer



**Ways and Means Committee
SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding
Support**

March 21, 2022

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

I would like to add my voice in support of the funding levels from Senate Bill 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 full funding of SB 448 at a level that will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas Vose
Director
Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

Ways and Means Committee

SB448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries, especially as we play a key role in aiding our communities' recovery from the pandemic. On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our 91,264 regular card holders and the numerous visitors who stop by one of our 7 public service outlets, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

Within one month of having to close our buildings due to the pandemic, Carroll County Public Library had produced online Storytimes, book clubs, and other virtual programming, hosted zoom meetings for community organizations, provided Wi-Fi access in our parking lots and began planning for "no contact" materials distribution.

We gave a great deal of thought to the most productive ways to invest CARES Act and ARPA funding, including ensuring our facilities were safe for the public and staff, increasing our offerings of online materials and digital books and broadening our workforce development resources. Our staff never stopped assisting customers with digital literacy, teaching users how to use online and downloadable materials. They taught our customers how to use Zoom and Teams, apply for jobs online, and find vaccine appointments and testing info. Teachers and students depended on being able to access downloadable books, trustworthy information and primary source material; especially when they were learning remotely. Thanks to our Health Department, we have provided clear information and supportive services like safe business reopening, vaccine appointments, vaccine clinics, and free test-kits and masks.

Usage of downloadable content nearly doubled during the pandemic. Thankfully CCPL was able to fund these collections by shifting funding from our physical materials, so we could try to meet demand.

Your support of SB 448 will also ensure Maryland's regional libraries can continue providing these important digital services in addition to necessary training, IT, technical services, and material delivery for the rural areas of our state who need that support. Without the support of these regional libraries, many of our peer libraries in Maryland will not be able to meet their community's needs and would face significant cuts to their current public services.

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

Sincerely,



Andrea Berstler
Executive Director

Eastern Shore REGIONAL LIBRARY

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

Ways and Means Committee

SB448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries - Funding

March 24, 2022

Support

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB 448 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding** to extend per capita increases through FY27. This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries, especially as we play a key role in aiding our communities' recovery from the pandemic.

On behalf of Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc. and the eight county library systems we represent, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 448.

As a supporting organization for eight county library systems, Eastern Shore Regional Library has witnessed the great work done by our public libraries over the last several years. Libraries bounced back quickly after early COVID-19 closings and found new ways to reach out to impacted citizens. From curbside materials pickups to portable hotspots & laptops to dispensing PPE and COVID-19 test kits, public libraries worked through their own staff shortages to provide services to isolated and struggling citizens. In the rural areas, our libraries succeeded in extending Internet connectivity to citizens in remote areas - helping schools, local governments, and small businesses realize their missions.

The Eastern Shore Regional Library has one responsibility and that is helping our member libraries provide the highest quality services to their users. During the pandemic, ESRL distributed \$150,000 in CARES funds to the eight library systems to help with PPE, Internet expansion, and service adjustments like curbside materials pickup. ESRL circulated 333,054 streaming books and media resources in fy21, a remarkable 15% increase over fy20. ESRL's Grants to Libraries program provided \$600,000 in grants to our member libraries for service enhancements, collection development, staff development, and programming.

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

Sincerely,



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