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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Bill 846 – Libraries – Circulation Records – Inspection, Use, or Disclosure Requirement Revision

February 22, 2023

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

Our state's librarians often handle requests from government officials, law enforcement and the general public who want information about circulation records. Librarians' actions on these requests are guided by Maryland Education Code (§23-108), and General Provision Code Title 4 Freedom of Information Act laws (§4-308).

Senate Bill 846 updates language in the Education Code and builds in components of the Public Information Act. Under this bill, a public, school, college, or university library in the State shall permit inspection, use or disclosure of the circulation of an individual only:

1. If necessary for the reasonable operation of the library;
2. On written consent of the individual; or
3. By subpoena or court order.

Our library users should be able to select, access, and consider information and ideas without fear of embarrassment or judgement. Senate Bill 846 will tighten up our circulation laws and allow our librarians to stand behind their users' right to privacy and freedom of inquiry.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 846.