

February 15, 2023

Senator Guy J. Guzzone, Chairman
Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building

Dear Senator Guzzone:

I am the Chair of the Boards of the Enoch Pratt Free Library Board, and I strongly support **SB 348 Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center – Funding**. This bill will continue the periodic increases to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) per capita funding formula beyond FY 2024, and this funding is essential for state library services.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated as the State Library Resource Center in 1971 to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. Since Maryland does not have a State Library, the SLRC services are critical to Maryland libraries and to citizens across the state. In FY 2022, SLRC was visited nearly 150,000 times, answered more than 255,000 reference questions, loaned more than 300,000 items, coordinated more than 46,000 interlibrary loans, and provided access to specialized databased that were searched more than 10.6 million times. In addition, SLRC provided training for librarians and public programs on genealogy and Maryland history to the public which had a combined attendance of nearly 2,800 people.

SLRC coordinates library services around the state that are filling a critical demand for services by job seekers, small business owners, early literacy, after-school safe places, and free internet and computer access. Library services are vital to successful schools, strong communities, and adult education, and we encourage passage of this important legislation to assure their continuation.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mychelle Farmer, MD

Mychelle Farmer, MD
Chair of the Boards, Enoch Pratt Free Library

cc: members, Senate Budget & Taxation Committee