

Pat Lasher
207 Saint Martins Road
Baltimore, MD 21218
February 11, 2023

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building

RE: SB 348 Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center — Funding

Dear Senator Guzzone

:

As a trustee and director of the board of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, I am writing to urge your support of **SB 348 Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center – Funding**. This important legislation would continue the periodic increases to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) per capita funding formula beyond FY 2024.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated the State Library Resource Center in 1971. Unlike most states, Maryland does not have a State Library which makes access to SLRC services 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. SLRC also provides training for librarians and educational public programs for Maryland citizens.

Meaningful training and reliable information is increasingly important to Maryland job seekers, small business owners, citizens seeking employment advancement and those re-entering the job forces; Early literacy, homework help, after-school safe places, and research materials are all vital to students from pre-K to graduate school; and free, reliable Internet access and available computers mean opportunity and progress for all. These services that SLRC provides are vital to successful schools, strong communities and adult education, and passage of this important legislation will assure that these valuable services continue.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patricia Lasher

cc: members, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee