

Friends of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Inc.

P. O. Box 23841, Baltimore, Maryland 21203

March 1, 2023

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

Dear Chairman Guzzone,

The Friends of the Enoch Pratt Free Library strongly support **SB 502 Enoch Pratt Free Library - Capital Project Funding**. We have been a vital support for the Pratt for 50 years and are excited about celebrating our 50th Golden Jubilee Anniversary this year. While we are truly excited about the increase in access to our libraries and facilities to a number of diverse constituents, it has also created another opportunity to rethink the need for 21st Century learning spaces.

Currently, there are 19 library facilities that are more than 50 years old which demonstrates the aging of the buildings, wear and tear of the facilities, and the need to prioritize planning for renovations and upgrades in the near future. It is also critical that learning spaces be redesigned to meet the needs of underserved communities, non-profits and other community partners. Additionally, many libraries functioned with faulty air and heating systems which resulted in its closure for undetermined periods of time. As a result of the closure we lost about 2,200 public service hours. These gaps in service created further inequities for black and brown students to receive high quality literacy services.

The Friends of the Pratt Library is proud of our legacy of supporting closing the achievement gaps, particularly for marginalized groups of students and communities.

Your full support and vote of **SB 502** ensures that the Enoch Pratt Free Library will continue to be a destination for hundreds and thousands of readers all across Maryland.

Thank you for your continued support and advocacy.

Sincerely,

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Flo Valentine, President
Friends of the Enoch Pratt Free Library