

SB 300_ Baltimore City Young Readers Program - Exp

Uploaded by: Alexa Thomas

Position: FAV



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 300
TITLE: Baltimore City Young Readers Program - Expansion and Alterations
DATE: February 22, 2023
POSITION: Support
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 300.

House Bill 300 renames and expands the Baltimore City Young Readers Program to the Statewide Young Readers Program in the Maryland State Library Agency. The bill also increases the mandated appropriation for this new statewide initiative to \$500,000, previously \$250,000.

The Maryland Governor's Young Readers Program is an affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which is a book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children, regardless of the family's income. The program delivers a free book every month to any Baltimore family with children from infancy through age four. This program is an impactful way to introduce very young kids to the joys of reading and storytelling.

Baltimore City's program has reached more than 4,400 families through a variety of service organizations and city and state agencies. We look forward to the statewide expansion of this innovative and effective early reading program.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 300 and requests a favorable report.

SB0300-EEE_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

Senate Bill 300

*Baltimore City Young Readers Program - Expansion and Alterations
(Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

Date: February 22, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 300. This bill would add greater flexibility to the existing successful Young Readers Program in partnership with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and would appropriate additional State funding to support the program and, in turn, the learning and growth of young readers around the state.

Counties were pleased a 2022 bill become law, making the Young Readers Program accessible to all jurisdictions and providing seed funding for those wishing to do so. The program provides free, high-quality literature and resources to children under the age of 5 and their families, regardless of the families' income status. Prior, the program only operated in Baltimore City and Montgomery County, where it proved beneficial in many ways, including improving literacy levels, increasing parent-child interaction, and better preparing children before they enter school.

SB 300 would provide greater flexibility to these reading programs, altering the current requirement for books to be mailed to simply being "distributed," so that families can also access them at libraries, schools, community centers, and other places. Furthermore, the bill would dedicate additional annual state funding to the program – from \$200,000 to \$500,000. Doing so will not only help new counties establish programs but would also allow existing programs to serve more Maryland children.

Counties are excited to see where the program takes Maryland students and SB 300 would further support those efforts. In fact, several jurisdictions have already established their own version of the program under the 2022 law.

All counties share in the goals of encouraging reading in young children, deepening literacy, and preparing kids to be successful in school. Counties welcome the opportunity to expand resources to do so via The Young Readers Program. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 300 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

SB300 Young Readers Expansion Act_letter of suppor

Uploaded by: Debby Bennett

Position: FAV



Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
SB300 - Baltimore Young Readers Program - Expansion and Alterations (Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023)
February 22, 2023
Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Committee Members:

This letter is in support of SB300 for a Statewide Young Readers Program.

Caroline County Public Library is the agency in Caroline County which manages Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Caroline County. We began our program in 2015 and have been fortunate to have strong Caroline County partners to both promote it and find funding for it. We are a small county and average around 1250 active participants (aged 0-5) with over 1,932 children having graduated as of January 2023. Also as of January 2023, we have provided a total of 98,000 Imagination Library books in Caroline County homes. The impact of this program is huge. I believe it brings a measure of equity to all children being ready for kindergarten. There are studies that state that there is a correlation between enrollment in DPIL and a child's Kindergarten readiness assessment score.

Thankfully, to-date we have never had to put a child on a waiting list. I understand that other Maryland programs have had to turn a child away from the program due to lack of funds.

I see this as an opportunity for the State to partner with Maryland public libraries and their affiliates to help build robust and sustaining young readers programs for all of Maryland's children to help prepare them for kindergarten and put them on a path to a successful education.

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

Sen. McCray_SB 300 Young Readers Program .pdf

Uploaded by: Destiny Bell

Position: FAV

CORY V. McCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 221
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410-841-3165 · 301-858-3165
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Cory.Mccray@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill 300

Bill Title: Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion and Alterations

Hearing Date: February 22, 2023, Education, Energy, and the Environment

Greetings, Chair Feldman, Madame Vice Chair, and all members of the Committee

It is with great honor that I present to you, Senate Bill 300. This bill is cross-filed with HB243. As members of the Senate, we know how fundamental reading and comprehension skills are to success. It is imperative that we use our positions of power to positively impact the future of our children. The Baltimore City Young Readers Program prepares the children of Baltimore City with speed, proper expression, and fluency. As a father of four, it is critical to instill the importance of education in my children. Being able to witness the impact of this program has encouraged its expansion statewide.

The purpose of the program is to educate children, provide the proper tools to improve their reading skills, and administer free high-quality books to children in Maryland. The Baltimore City Young Readers program has made an impact on plenty of children within the city. It is time to extend our influence by expanding the program statewide.

If approved the Young Readers Matching Grant Program will provide the following:

- Support the establishment and operation of affiliated services.
- Contribution of an amount equal to the amount of funding provided for the operation of an affiliated service.

It is imperative that we implement any necessary recourses to improve the literacy skills of children in our state. For these reasons I respectfully request your support in approving Senate Bill 300.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory V. McCray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long horizontal stroke.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator

Support Letter SB300 Young Readers Program Expansi

Uploaded by: Janet Salazar

Position: FAV



Centreville 121 South Commerce St., Centreville, MD, 21617 | 410-758-0980

Kent Island 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD, 21666 | 410-643-8161

Ways and Means Committee

SB 300 Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion Act of 2023

February 22, 2023

Support

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB 300: Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion Act of 2023. As the Director of the Queen Anne’s County Library I have first-hand knowledge of the impact participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has on a child’s ability to enter school ready to learn. In 2018 we were fortunate to partner with our local Judy Center to provide access to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for our under 5 population. The impact was significant. In the 2017/2018 school year, 48% of Queen Anne’s County children entered kindergarten ready to learn. Just one year later, after implementing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, 57% of Queen Anne’s County children entered kindergarten ready to learn, an increase of 18.75%. Studies show that the single most important activity parents can do to get their children ready to read and learn is to read out loud to them. The number of words a child knows upon entering school is a key indicator of future school success. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library puts the books into the hands of parents so they can model reading as a behavior and increase their children’s vocabulary. During the pandemic, when schools were closed to students, this service was needed more than ever.

The cost of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library can be a detriment to libraries being able to participate. For every child enrolled in the program, the cost is \$25 per year until the child ages out at 5 years old. Committing to the program means making hard decisions about other services that may not have resources to continue. The funding in this bill will be crucial to our ability to continue to provide this program. Currently, we are fortunate enough to get a small grant from the Queen Anne’s County Commissioners to help support our program. In FY 2023 that funding is \$10,000, but the cost of the program each year has been between \$20,000 and \$24,000. In our most impoverished area, only 7.7% of children eligible for this program are enrolled. With launch of our new Mobile Library service this year, we have been able to bring information about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library service directly to the families who need it the most and we have already seen an increase in the number of applications for the service. The 50% matching funds would ensure that this valuable service would continue for our residents.

I ask the committee to support SB 300 so that all Maryland Public Libraries will have this funding available to support participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library statewide.

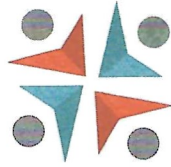
Sincerely,

Janet Salazar
Director
Queen Anne's County Library

SB300_Favorable_WCFL.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenny Bakos

Position: FAV



WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY

Where People & Possibilities Meet

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
SB300 – Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion and Alterations
February 22, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members,

I am writing in **Support of SB300 – Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion and Alterations.**

The expansion of the existing Baltimore City Young Readers Matching Grant Program to the entire state of Maryland would be revolutionary for many of our state's youngest readers. This increase in service capacity would allow those in Maryland's most vulnerable homes the opportunity to be better prepared for formal education, as reading materials would be delivered to their homes once a month free of charge. The pride of ownership of a personal library that can be revisited many times over does wonders for a child that may be experiencing volatility in their young lives.

Washington County would especially benefit from this service, as the current service provider (Washington County Community Foundation) for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, the national program that provides free materials to young readers, has been unable to provide funding support to this program. If funded for all of Maryland, the 8,577 children under the age of five in Washington County would be impacted in an incredibly positive way.

In today's fragile economic environment, providing this free service to children where they are assures that fewer younger people are at a disadvantage as they move through our state's education system.

Again, thank you for supporting SB300.

Respectfully,

Jenny L. Bakos
Executive Director
Washington County Free Library

SB300 Testimony_Cecil County.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Miller

Position: FAV

Senate

Education, Energy and the Environment

SB 300 Baltimore City Young Readers Program- Expansion and Alteration

February 22, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB300, the Young Readers Expansion Act of 2023. I want to especially thank Delegate Korman, for his initial leadership to champion early childhood education and access by introducing last year's Baltimore City Young Readers Program, and his foresight in working with the Maryland State Library Agency and public library systems across our state to expand the program through this act.

As a librarian, an educator, and a parent, I have experienced firsthand the impact that access to books and literacy has, early in a child's life. I, along with many experts, believe that within the critical window of birth to age 5 is the greatest opportunity to impact a person's long term development and success in life. It's why so many of the public library's program's are directed at children and caregivers at this stage of human development. So often, we are the first point of contact for that child and their family to engage with books and learning. And for many in our state who cannot afford to purchase books or travel to museums or enrichment centers for learning and exploration, we are the only point of contact.

Research from a 2010 study on family culture and educational success determined that children with books in the home will perform better in school and in life. A child growing up in a home with just 25 books will, on average, complete two more years of school than would a child from a home without any books at all. In Cecil County, we used this research to create one of our most impactful early literacy outreach programs in partnership with PNC Bank's Grow Up Great Foundation. Now more than a decade in existence, our My Special Book program has placed more than 10,000 books into the homes of pre-school age children in low-income communities and neighborhoods that they get to keep as a way to start building their own home libraries. For so many of the children I've met through this program, this is the first book they've ever owned, and they are just incredulous that they get to keep it. The pride with which they write their name in their book is truly something to behold. Prior to the pandemic, the My Special Book, and other library programs, proved integral in helping to increase our county's percentage of children who were kindergarten ready. Our county has historically struggled with this and has had one of the lowest percentages in the state, which is now exacerbated by the effects of pandemic learning loss.

By expanding the Young Readers program across the state, we will be able to continue our work to move the needle on early childhood education, both through our library's programs as well as in partnership with our local women's civic league, who recently launched a Dolly Parton Imagination Library program that serves approximately 1,000 children out of the 6,000 children age birth through 5 in Cecil County, but is unable to expand based on funding limitations. With the modest investment of these funds, we will be able to yield positive returns that impact our children and our state for generations, ensuring that no Marylander is left behind. I ask that you join Delegate Korman, Senator McCray, public librarians, and parents everywhere in supporting access to early learning and literacy throughout our state by giving SB300 a favorable reading. Thank you.

Morgan Miller
Executive Director

_PGCMLS.SB300 Letter.02222023.pdf

Uploaded by: Pamela Hamlin

Position: FAV

Maryland State Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
SB300-Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion and Alterations
(Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023)
Support

February 21, 2023

Dear Committee Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

We are writing on behalf of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) in **support of SB300 Education – Young Readers Programs - Expansion and Alterations (Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023)**. The bill will provide essential support to Maryland's public libraries, including PGCMLS, for advancing early literacy and kindergarten readiness for young Marylanders (from birth to age 5).

PGCMLS' existing Dolly Parton Imagination Library program is called [Books from Birth](#). The program launched in July 2017 with funding from the Library's operating budget that was designated by then Prince George's County Executive, Rushern Baker, and extended by County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. This program encourages parents and caregivers to talk, sing, share books and play with their very young children to prepare them for school and life. Having books in the home has a strong effect on children's educational attainment even above and beyond such factors as education level of the parents and parental occupation. Ensuring that a child has just twenty books still has a significant impact on a young child's later success in school, but our program goes beyond that minimum threshold. If a parent registers their child shortly after birth, the child can receive up to sixty free books for their home library. Families can bond over sharing books together even if a parent or caregiver cannot read, simply talking about the pictures and making up stories to go with the pictures allows them to be a big part of their child's future success.

Growing Books from Birth's Impact

Over the past five and a half years, PGCMLS has reached over children under the age of five with existing local Books from Birth funding.

- Prince George's County children have received 660,000 free books.
- Over 12,000 children have "graduated"/aged out of the program. Approximately 4,000 children started our program, but then moved out of our area.
- Currently, over 14,000 children are actively receiving free books on a monthly basis.
- As of May 2022, we have established a partnership with the University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center in Largo. Families that live in the county are given the opportunity to register for our Imagination Library Books from Birth program during their discharge. We average 58 registrations per month from this collaboration.

As PGCMLS continue to reach a growing population of children (the 2020 Census indicates that Prince George's County is home to 62,800+ children under age 5,) and more children register for our program, the support from Prince George's County has not been able to increase to accommodate the growing number of books required to be sent out monthly. In fact, our local program budget has been cut because of budget austerity measures. **The state funding proposed under SB 300 will allow PGCMLS to continue to keep up with the growing demand for more books as more families register. It will also help other public library systems in Maryland establish or grow their similar programs.** PGCMLS and Maryland's libraries wish to continue to be a positive force in strengthening children and their families through bonding over books.

We invite you to watch an interview [with Tiffany](#), a dedicated mother of two children from Prince George's County. Tiffany shares how her two year old Isaiah has recently started pointing to the pictures in the book, "Truck Stop". As he points, she identifies the types of trucks for him. Since this was a recent development in his interaction with books, she is excited to share with him and use different voices for different characters. Isaiah is learning print awareness, vocabulary, letter recognition, sound awareness and is bonding with his mother. His older sister, Gabriella often joins in sharing books together. This is a wonderful example of how parents are their child's first and best teacher, as well as how older siblings play an important role. (See wonderful interaction between Mom and son at 1 min 50s)

Thank you for considering this important bill that will continue to address the opportunity gap for young Marylanders. If our children get extra support for developing their literacy skills they will have a greater chance of succeeding in school and pursuing their dreams. Please feel free to contact us at pamela.hamlin@pgcmls.info if we may be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Nicholas A. Brown
Acting Co-CEO
COO for Communication and Outreach



Pamela Hamlin
Family Literacy Specialist

APPENDIX

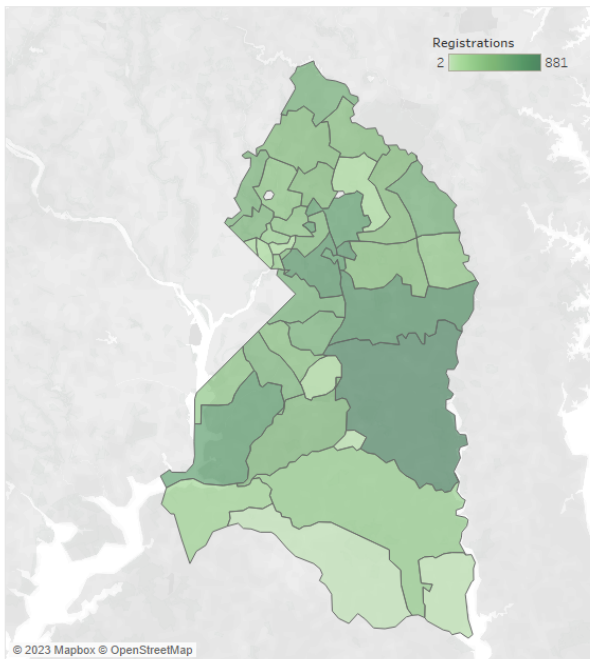
Resident Testimonials

- “Our kids love receiving the books monthly!”
- “Thank you so much for sending books to our son since he was a baby. He has loved reading each one of them.”
- “We love our imagination library books!”
- “We are all really enjoying the books you select each month and greatly appreciate this service. Thank you so, so much. As a fellow librarian, I am especially grateful to you for all you do!!!”
- “We appreciated the program while we were using it, so thank you for this service! I have recommended it to fellow parents as well.”
- “My children love these books and I appreciate this program.”
- “Our son looks forward to reading new books so much.”
- “We did love the books that our daughter received through this program -- many continue to be her favorites now.”
- “Thank you so much! Looking forward to all these great books.”

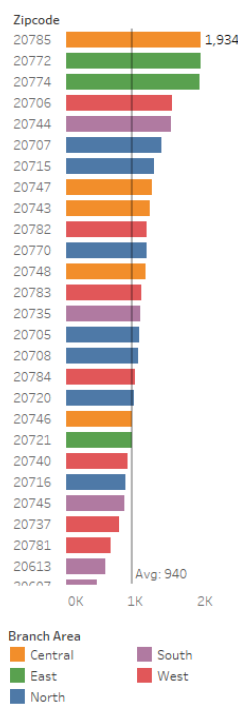
PGCMLS Books from Birth Data Dashboard (February 2023)

Books from Birth

Currently Registered County Map
All Data as of: 2/3/2023 5:27:38 PM

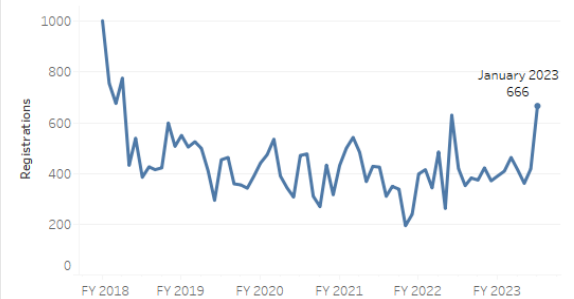


Top Zipcodes by Registration

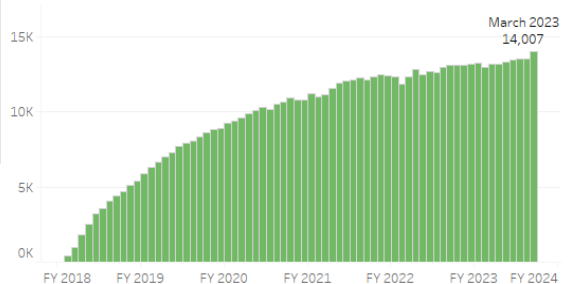


Total Active: **14,007**
Total Registrations: **29,971**
Total Books Sent: **665,191**

New Registrations per Month



of Children Receiving a Book per Month



SB 300 Testimony MSLA Feb 22 2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Tamar Sarnoff

Position: FAV



Irene Padilla
Maryland State Librarian

25 S. Charles Street, Suite 1310 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201 • 667-219-4800

BILL:	Senate Bill 300	DATE:	February 17, 2023
SUBJECT:	Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion and Alterations 3 (Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023)	COMMITTEE:	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
SPEAKER:	Tamar Sarnoff, PhD	POSITION:	Favorable

EXPLANATION

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is in support of SB 300, and encourages a favorable review. Funding for this program will have a widespread positive impact across the state, and MSLA is in the best position to manage the distribution of these funds.

There are currently 17 county-level Young Readers Programs across Maryland, providing materials to about 37,000 children, or 10% of all children under five in Maryland. The expansion of the Young Readers Program as described in SB 300 would subsidize the distribution of new books every month to more than 35,000 additional Maryland children under five, nearly doubling the number of children who currently participate in a Young Readers Program.

Initiatives such as the Young Readers Program are gaining in popularity around the country. Washington, DC, as well as nearly every county abutting Maryland host similar programs. Providing funds to expand the Young Readers Program statewide would make Maryland more appealing to families relocating to and within the Delmarva area. This program will enhance the workforce *now* by attracting professionals with young families, and *in a generation* when Maryland's youth who participate in the program join the workforce. Several studies have shown that programs such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library have a positive impact on young children on metrics such as: Early Reading Skills, School Readiness, Language and Life Skills Development and Parent Engagement. This early learning and reading program will help Maryland's children gain confidence in reading and learning, and in turn, better prepare Maryland's children to be successful students. Maryland's students who are better prepared for school are more likely to successfully participate in the Maryland workforce.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is prepared to take responsibility for the management of this program. The purpose, scope and operational aspects of the program align with those of the agency. MSLA and the Maryland public library systems provide extensive services and resources to children under five. Pursuant to COMAR 23-410, "Service offerings required by public libraries", among the responsibilities of public libraries in Maryland, libraries are responsible for providing programs designed to increase scores on the kindergarten assessment, as well as programs designed to close learning gaps created by lack of access to education. SB 300 will address these goals.

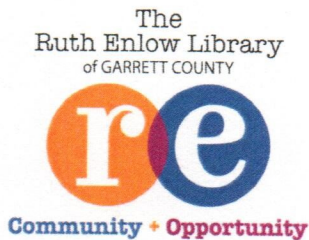
Around the state, public libraries lend millions of early reader materials at each of nearly 200 locations. In fiscal year 2021, Maryland public libraries hosted more than 175,000 attendees at 4,800 preschool programs. MSLA supports training and professional development opportunities for those serving the youngest Marylanders, as well as providing direct service through programs such as the Day-by-Day Early Literacy calendar, with daily age appropriate activities and information about Maryland, and Hatchlings, which teaches early literacy skills to expectant parents and parents of newborns.

The Young Readers Program expansion benefits all of Maryland. MSLA and Maryland public libraries are experts on early learning efforts, and MSLA is capable of taking ownership of this program. MSLA fully supports the passage of this bill.

SB 300 Testimony - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Vose

Position: FAV



Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 15, 2023

Dear Senator Feldman, Senator Kagan, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to add my voice to those asking for your support in passing **SB300 - Baltimore City Young Readers Program – Expansion and Alterations**, as an excellent way to supplement libraries' mission to create young readers in their communities.

Baltimore's program is well worthy of emulation, and this bill would provide funding to expand the book distribution program statewide, ensuring that children in low-income areas will be provided with access to quality reading materials that can help make a difference in their education and in their outlook on life. Indeed, shouldn't putting books in the hands of low-income children at comparatively minimal cost go without saying?

Thank you once again for your ongoing support of Maryland's libraries and the people they serve!

Sincerely,

Thomas Vose
Director, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

SB0300 FWA 1.pdf

Uploaded by: Virginia Kolakoski

Position: FWA

SB0300 FWA This bill needs to ensure parental involvement with books that are chosen