

Ways and Means Committee
SB0831 – Libraries - Regional Resource Centers – Governance Requirements
February 22, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman, and Vice Chair Kagen and Committee members:

I am writing in **Support of SB0831 Regional Resource Centers – Governance Requirements**.

In 1957, the Maryland Code, Section 23-202, Regional Resource Centers statute was passed into law. The law worked very well for decades, as the regional libraries were a very small part of library services for the counties they served. Funding was minimal and unstable until the late 1990's when per capita funding was established.

Today, the regional resource centers have evolved into a major influential force for the fourteen county library systems they support. However, the law governing regional resource centers has not evolved--we have a 1957 law governing 2023 organizations. The governing boards of the three regional resource centers have developed in different ways. They may be county library board trustees, county citizens, or county library directors. Terms range from no term limits, to one and three years. There is no unified guidance from the current statute, which is unclear on basic governance such as the roles and responsibilities of the boards, officer qualifications, term limits, meetings, attendance, role of library management staff, etc.

SB0831 contains specific language that defines the governance of the regional resource centers and has been vetted and approved by the regional resource center directors, their current boards, the directors and boards of the fourteen county libraries served, as well as the Maryland State Library Agency.

I am deeply grateful to the Maryland Legislature as a whole for their commitment to public libraries and the services we provide to our citizens. I respectfully ask for your support of HB1115 which will allow Maryland's regional resource centers to continue to expand our role in supporting library equity and access in our rural communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John C Venditta, CEO
Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc.