



**Ways and Means Committee  
HB 276 Education - Libraries – Funding, February 8, 2023 – Support**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of HB 276 Education – Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for public libraries through fiscal year 2027 and thereafter. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in our local communities, especially as libraries continue to aid in recovery from the pandemic and help families weather economic uncertainty.

Over the last three years, Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) has provided a lifeline for many residents. Working with our partners in public health, AACPL staff have given out nearly 276,000 COVID-19 test kits and 280,000 high quality masks. Library staff have helped people navigate the safety net benefits process and get jobs. They have given away food, books, warm coats, diapers and wipes.

In fact, our Discoveries Library location at Westfield Annapolis Mall opened a community pantry in FY 2022 for baby and menstrual products and distributed more than 67,000 diapers and nearly 1,000 packs of menstrual products to people from 50 different Maryland zip codes in its first year. We have also added pantries at the Brooklyn Park and Glen Burnie libraries.

In addition to the work we are known for, specifically loaning out books, movies and music, AACPL staff are proud to provide top notch kindergarten readiness curriculum and training for parents and caregivers. Because addressing the needs of the entire family is critical to a child being school ready, the library provides social workers, job training, resume help and thousands of classes in parenting, financial literacy and other topics. Along with weekly Every Child Ready to Read classes in all 16 libraries and reading incentive programs, AACPL now offers special outreach events in under resourced communities.

Libraries are trusted community resources that are vital to the health and wellbeing of a community. Residents know that when they come to the library, they can feel confident in what they discover and in what they receive whether that's a COVID-19 test kit, training on how to build a resume, or kindergarten readiness classes. Best of all, we proudly serve everyone! We respectfully ask for your support of HB 276 which will allow us to continue to expand our role in providing resources and supporting access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Skip Auld  
AACPL Chief Executive Officer

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