

Written Testimony in Favor of
SB 434 Education –State Library Resource Center – Funding which would
Alter the calculation of certain funding for the State Library Resource
Center for fiscal years 2025 through 2031.

Mr. Chairman and Honored Members of the Committee,

Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML), wish to voice its strong support for this bill. CML is a non-profit association that works to build greater public awareness of the need for the services that Maryland libraries across the state provide its citizens. Recognizing the importance of our public libraries to the over three million card carrying library users, CML is a strong statewide network of individuals and organizations who value and advocate for Maryland libraries.

Maryland is often called “Library Heaven” because of our State Library Resource Center’s (SLRC) ability to provide an equity of service to Maryland’s public and school libraries across the state. Because of SLRC, even our poorer more rural counties have access to the same online educational databases and electronic resources as our more urban and wealthier counties and at no cost to them. Educational databases that are used in public K-12 schools and public libraries, genealogy databases, language databases, vocational training databases all available because of SLRC. SLRC provides the Internet backbone for all our public libraries in Maryland as well as many of our municipalities and government agencies. Every year, millions of books and library materials travel from one library system to another in answer to the reading needs of our citizens thanks to the delivery system SLRC provides throughout the state.

It has been years, since SLRC has received a funding formula increase while costs have continued to rise that threaten its ability to continue the level of service and resources it is able to currently deliver to Maryland’s public schools and libraries. Our public schools, small business owners, children and families all depend on our public libraries, who in turn, greatly depend on our State Library Resource Center and ask you to vote favorable to SB434.