

# County Public Libraries Overdue Materials

Uploaded by: Irene Padilla

Position: FAV



**BILL:** SB 250 **DATE:** January 17, 2024

**SUBJECT:** County Public Libraries - **COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy  
Overdue Library Materials - and the Environment  
Minors

**SPEAKER:** Irene Padilla **POSITION:** Support  
State Librarian

### **EXPLANATION**

The Building Lifelong Library Learners Act legislation was passed during the 2021 session of the General Assembly. This bill updates § 23-409. Restrictions on fines on minors' overdue library materials - Adoption of regulations. The intent of the legislation is to prevent public libraries from charging overdue fines to a minor and regulate the charging of certain fees. This revision more fully describes the purpose and intent of the legislation.

This bill ensures equity by clarifying otherwise confusing language in the statute and provides definitions for a minor (defined as an individual under the age of 18), library materials, replacement fee, overdue fine and special collections. This commonality of definitions ensures that all eligible Maryland residents, regardless of race, gender, and socioeconomic status receive equitable treatment.

This statute is relied upon by library directors and library boards for guidance to ensure that all Maryland public libraries understand and follow the same requirements. It also provides the necessary documentation if library boards or local governments try to reinstate library fines for minors at a future date.

Local government operations or finances (revenues or expenditures) will not be affected by this legislation.

MSLA fully supports the passage of this bill.

**BaltimoreCounty\_INFO\_SB0250.pdf**

Uploaded by: William Thorne

Position: INFO



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**BILL NO.: SB 250**

**TITLE:** County Public Libraries – Overdue Library Materials - Minors  
**SPONSOR:** By Request – Departmental – State Library

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**POSITION:** **Letter of Information**

**DATE:** January 17, 2024

Baltimore County **offers this Letter of Information regarding** Senate Bill 250 – County Public Libraries – Overdue Library Materials – Minors. This legislation would prevent a county’s public library system from fining a minor for overdue library materials. Furthermore, it would prohibit a county public library system from charging a minor a replacement fee for overdue library materials until 21 days after the material’s due date. This is critical, as the American Library Association has asserted that monetary fines contribute to inequity in the library.

Baltimore County implements policies that broaden accessibility to and ensures equity in our public services and resources. The Baltimore County Public Library permanently abolished late fees for its materials in 2021 for all of its customers – minors and adults. This policy removed a barrier that blocked access to the library for the people who depend on it the most.

This change by BCPL cleared the accounts of nearly 75,000 library cardholders and allowed those with previous late fees the opportunity for a clean slate and an invitation to return to the library. While library cardholders aren’t fined by the Baltimore County Public Library for keeping items beyond the return date, they need to return overdue books to check out more items. BCPL cardholders are still responsible for replacement costs if a book is damaged or lost.

For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).