

Ways and Means Committee

HB489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding

February 7, 2024

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your **favorable support of HB489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding**. This bill provides necessary funding for the State Library Resource Center for FY2025-FY2031 at the rate of inflation. While this funding measure passed the Senate last year, it did not pass the House, resulting in another year of flat funding and potentially negative affects to services.

The State Library Resource Center (SLRC) provides many important services to public and school libraries across the state, including broadband internet and digital resources. It is a highly collaborative system that maximizes return on state and local dollars and allows county library systems to operate most efficiently.

SLRC is an extremely well utilized, economical and cost-effective way to connect all Marylanders with a multitude of valuable services, including workforce and small business training, historical and special collections that pertain to Maryland, programs, database access and inter-library loan services. Last year, SLRC loaned more than 300,000 items and facilitated 46,000 inter-library loans- an essential service that SLRC coordinates throughout the state to share books and other resources from county to county. With a limited budget for print collections in Cecil County, we rely heavily on SLRC’s inter-library loan service to connect citizens with the resources they need to create individual and community success.

Additionally, SLRC provides database access to all county public library systems throughout the state. Last year, Marylanders performed more than 1 million searches using high quality databases provided by SLRC. For Cecil Countians, this includes access to Peterson’s Test Prep for college, career, and educational attainment, Mango Foreign Languages, and Heritage Quest- our only online resource for genealogical research. Although essential for our citizens, we would never be able to broker these databases as a stand-alone county.

I had the honor of serving on the Strategic Planning Committee for SLRC’s most recent plan and am excited by their ambitious goals that focus their resources on expanding digital equity throughout the state and training library staff to deliver in-demand 21st century library services. Your committee’s support for their current and future funding will ensure they are able to meet these goals and that no citizen, student, or county public library system, is left behind. Thank you for your past support of the State Library Resource Center’s mission and funding and we ask that you favorably recommend HB489 for passage.

Sincerely,

Morgan Miller, Executive Director