



Ways and Means Committee
HB489 – Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding
February 7, 2024

Dear Chair Atterbeary, and Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee members:

I am writing in **Support of HB489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding**

The Western Maryland Regional Library (WMRL) strongly supports **HB489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding** which would alter the calculation of certain funding for the State Library Resource Center. It has been years since SLRC has received a funding formula increase while costs have continued to rise that threatens its ability to function at the high level it has for many years. SLRC serves Maryland’s public, academic, school, and special libraries. It provides statewide resources and services for Maryland libraries and their customers. In Western Maryland, SLRC plays an essential role in cultivating public libraries and the communities they support. These are just a few of the SLRC services that positively impact our region.

Research databases: SLRC provides a collection of research databases to our three public libraries and to the public school system. All residents have access to a core collection of databases for online language learning, family history research, job and career resources, general research support, test preparation, and more.

Statewide interlibrary loan: The Marina system, run by SLRC, allows Maryland public library cardholders to request materials not owned by their local public library system from another Maryland public library system. This highly popular sharing agreement gives our residents access to materials they would not otherwise be able to borrow. We have seen a steady growth in the use of this service over the past several fiscal years.

Professional Development: SLRC provides a full range of professional development opportunities for Maryland librarians, including online courses, in-person training, and conferences. This training helps librarians navigate issues such as virtual library services, customer service, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and collection management.

Delivery of Materials: This past year SLRC took on the full cost of delivering all of WMRL’s Interlibrary loan materials. This has had a major positive impact on WMRL’s budget and the efficiency of the delivery system. As the smallest of the Regional libraries, WMRL relies heavily on the services SLRC provides.

Maryland public libraries are among the strongest, if not the strongest system of public libraries in the nation. This is due in large part to the continued support of the Maryland

General Assembly and its support of The State Library Resource Center for which I am very grateful. I respectfully ask for your support of HB489.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Hulett".

Elizabeth Hulett

Director

Western Maryland Regional Library