



Ways and Means Committee
HB489: Education - State Library Resource Center – Funding
February 5, 2024
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the Committee,

Please support HB489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding. This bill provides necessary funding for the State Library Resource Center for FY2024-FY2030.

The State Library Resource Center (SLRC) provides vital services to public and school libraries across the state, including broadband and database access, and thus is of great importance for Maryland residents and students. It gives great return on state and local dollars and enhances county library systems operations.

Here are some of the important databases provided by SLRC and their use the past year:

- Gale Educational Databases had 144,053 uses in public K-12 schools and 922,456 uses in public libraries. Total: 1,066,509 uses
- Heritage Quest (a genealogy database) had 276,654 downloads
- Mango Languages had 6,853 uses in public K-12 schools and 87,768 uses in public libraries for a total of 94,617 uses.

Unfortunately, these services are going up in cost. SLRC needs more funds to offer them

SLRC provides internet connection service utilizing high speed fiber to all public libraries in Maryland as well as to 25 municipalities and government agencies throughout the state at no cost to the recipients.

SLRC also has a collection of nearly 1 million items. Many of these items are rare, historic, or directly relevant to Maryland. No other library in the state can afford to purchase and maintain such items.

The Maryland Interlibrary Loan (MILO) provides pickup, delivery, and coordination of borrowing throughout the state through SLRC. This system also facilitates national and international borrowing. Library users around the state rely on SLRC to deliver the many books that they cannot find space for on their shelves or afford to purchase. We anticipate that delivery charges will continue to rise along with gas prices and contractual driver wages.

In short, SLRC provides vital services to help Marylanders thrive. Please support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Blackwell".

Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary's County Library

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