



# Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.

*Advancing Library Excellence*

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February 5, 2024

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

I am writing in support of **HB0489 – Education – State Library Resource Center – Funding**. The State Library Resource Center is an integral part of Maryland's library network.

Previously, the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) was not part of the delivery route for Maryland Interlibrary Loan (MILO). This required SMRLA to ship materials back to the State Library Resource Center for materials that were borrowed from outside of Southern MD. At an increased cost of \$80,000, the State Library Resource Center provided direct delivery to not only the Southern MD region but also to our colleagues in the western part of the state. This is a tremendous cost savings to SMRLA that will allow us to expand our own services to Southern MD's libraries.

Another service that is beneficial to libraries is access to online resources. In FY 2023, the State Library Resource Center funded Gale Educational Databases had over 1,000,000 uses; Heritage Quest (a genealogy database) had 276,654 downloads; and Mango Languages was used over 94,000 times. These resources provide continued opportunities for learning outside of traditional library hours and the data illustrates that more and more library customers are taking advantage of online resources at their libraries. To provide this level of access to information comes at a significant cost—between FY 2021 and FY 2022, the cost of the Gale resources increased 43% in spite of regular and ongoing price negotiations between the State Library Resource Center and the vendor.

With increased usage comes increased costs as it relates to library resources. If the State Library Resource Center does not secure their budget increases, it will be a budget cut for them. Additionally, a budget cut will disproportionately affect my partner libraries in Southern MD because we are unable to sustain the State Library Resource Center's level of services on our own. For these reasons, SMRLA supports the passage of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle  
CEO