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February 5, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chairwoman
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **HB 489 Education – State Library Resource Center – Funding - SUPPORT**

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary:

I am the Chair of the Enoch Pratt Free Library Board of Trustees and I strongly support **HB 489 Education — State Library Resource Center - Funding** which would continue periodic increases to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) per capita funding formula beyond FY 2025.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services necessary for efficient and economical library services in Maryland. The Center includes over four million items in its collection that are available to anyone in the state AT NO COST to the user. In FY 23, SLRC was visited nearly 300,000 times, which represented an 119% increase of SLRC services compared to requests during FY22. The SLRC staff coordinated more than 72,000 interlibrary loans, and provided access to specialized databases that were searched more than 10.6 million times.

SLRC coordinates library services throughout Maryland that fill a critical demand for services utilized by every citizen in the state. By supporting these centralized services, leadership in Maryland is efficiently and effectively providing its citizens with the tools to excel in school, work, and life. Without increased funding, these services will be cut, which could impact every citizen and every jurisdiction in the state.

Maryland's library services are vital to successful schools, strong communities and education and we encourage passage of this important legislation to ensure SLRC's future impact in Maryland.

Thank you very much for your consideration and dedication to the citizens of Maryland.

Sincerely,



Christine M. Espenshade
Chair, Board of Trustees, Enoch Pratt Free Library

cc: Members, House Ways and Means Committee