



**House Ways and Means Committee
HB 489, State Library Resource Center – Funding
February 5, 2024 -- Support**

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Wilkins and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB 489 - State Library Resource – Funding. The bill will minimally increase funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) from FY 2025-2031. These small funding increases will allow SLRC to help libraries across the state build stronger communities.

Maryland is unique in that we don't have a State Library. SLRC serves as the state's library allowing county and regional library systems to leverage their limited resources and act as a multiplier for all we can provide for the residents of our state. It is truly a cost saver and a vital part of providing impactful library service.

SLRC offers high-quality educational databases and research materials that help citizens statewide through their local library systems. The homework help resources provided through SLRC level the playing field for residents who don't have access to private tutors or the ability to travel to get information for assignments. With a library card, and perhaps a library-loaned Chromebook and Wi-Fi hotspot, or Internet access through the Affordable Connectivity Program, they can search high quality databases for information that will be truthful and accurate. Educators also have access to curriculum and other electronic resources through SLRC that can be used in the classroom.

Additionally, SLRC staff conduct key training for library staff including trauma-informed customer service and resiliency. If the pandemic showed us anything, it's that library staff often serve as social workers, teachers, job coaches and detectives connecting people with the resources they so desperately need, whether it's housing, COVID test kits, government benefits or resume help, just to name a few. SLRC helps us help our customers by better understanding their needs and the experiences they bring to every interaction.

SLRC also provides valuable programs on genealogy and Maryland history for library staff and the public. They offer access to genealogy databases available to anyone with a library card, free of charge. We respectfully ask for your support of HB 489. In supporting SLRC, you support your local library and your constituents. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Skip Auld, AACPL Chief Executive Officer

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