



Testimony in FAVOR (FAV) of

HB 0489 Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center- Funding

February 5, 2024

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

As Secretary of the Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees, I would like to express my support for **HB 0489 Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center – Funding**, to continue the periodic increases to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) per capita funding formula beyond FY 2024.

In my professional life, I am an educator who studies adolescent literacy, so libraries and their services are a large part of what I do, study, and teach. And, unfortunately, in working with students and educators in Kent and Queen Anne’s Counties, I see that there is a gap between need and access – to libraries and their services, to information, and to technology and the internet. Rural residents without public transportation are always challenged in gaining access – something that SLRC helps provide, in interlibrary loan, in internet access, and in database subscriptions. They also work to maintain important Maryland history documents and train librarians in how to use them.

SLRC fills a gap in Maryland without a State Library. They supplement some of what small counties and small libraries can’t provide, making us all stronger and more able to meet our own patrons’ needs. A stronger library can mean more programming and more access to information for librarians and patrons – a stronger community.

As our Executive Director has reminded the Board of Trustees, Kent is the smallest county in Maryland in so many ways, and “we could not be as successful without the support of the State Library Resource Center. They have provided funding for vital staff training, material delivery services, and expanded access to eBook collections. We respectfully ask for your support of HB 0489, which will allow us to continue to grow our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.”

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Erin M. Counihan
Board of Trustees, Secretary