



**BALTIMORE COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee SB 434/HB 489
State Library Resource Center – Funding
February 5, 2024 - Support**

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL), I am writing to express my support for **SB434/HB 489: Education – State Library Resource Center – Funding**, which will ensure adequate funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC).

SLRC plays a critical function for all public libraries in the state, including BCPL. SLRC has a unique collection of nearly 1 million items. Many of these items are rare, historic, or directly relevant to the history of Maryland. No other library in the state can afford to purchase and maintain such items, and BCPL relies on the expertise of the SLRC staff to curate, preserve and provide access to these materials, which ultimately tell the story of us as Marylanders.

SLRC facilitates Maryland Interlibrary Loan (MILO), which provides pickup, delivery, and coordination of borrowing throughout the state. Because no Maryland library system has an unlimited collection budget or infinite shelving space to house all published materials, library users around the state rely on MILO to gain access to many books that are not available at their local libraries. Anyone in the state with a library card can request materials from another library including SLRC. BCPL loaned out materials to cover 24,349 requests, and BCPL customers borrowed 34,653 materials via MILO. This invaluable service gives Maryland residents the most bang for their buck, opening up access beyond the limits of geography or library budgets.

A lot of the services that SLRC provides for public libraries and our communities cannot happen without funding and support from legislators in the General Assembly. Rising costs due to inflation mean that these services cannot be sustained at current levels without a commensurate increase in SLRC funding. Passage of SB434/HB489 will ensure that BCPL customers and all Maryland residents maintain access to the rich resources and services provided by SLRC.

Thank you for your continued support of Maryland's libraries.

Sincerely,

Sonia Alcántara-Antoine
Chief Executive Officer, Baltimore County Public Library