BILL:	**Senate Bill 250**	**DATE:**	March 20, 2024
SUBJECT:	County Public Libraries – Overdue Library Materials – Minors	**COMMITTEE:**	House Ways and Means
SPEAKER:	Irene Padilla, State Librarian	**POSITION:**	Favorable

EXPLANATION

The Building Lifelong Library Learners Act legislation was passed during the 2021 session of the General Assembly. This bill updates § 23-409. Restrictions on fines on minors' overdue library materials - Adoption of regulations. The intent of the legislation is to prevent public libraries from charging overdue fines to a minor and regulate the charging of certain fees. This revision more fully describes the purpose and intent of the legislation.

This bill ensures equity by clarifying otherwise confusing language in the statute and provides definitions for a minor (defined as an individual under the age of 18), library materials, replacement fee, overdue fine and special collections. This commonality of definitions ensures that all eligible Maryland residents, regardless of race, gender, and socioeconomic status receive equitable treatment.

In addition to prohibiting a county public library from charging a minor a fine or replacement fee for overdue library materials borrowed by a minor, the bill was amended to include:

1. Materials intended for children or teens. This requires all Maryland public libraries to make all J (Juvenile) and YA (Young Adult) materials fine-free in addition to any materials borrowed on J and YA cards.
2. Additionally, if overdue library materials borrowed by a minor or intended for children or teens are returned in a non-damaged condition within six months after a replacement fee has been paid, the public library shall refund the replacement fee.

This statute is relied upon by library directors and library boards for guidance to ensure that all Maryland public libraries understand and follow the same requirements. It also provides the necessary documentation if library boards or local governments try to reinstate library fines for minors at a future date.

Local government operations or finances (revenues or expenditures) will not be affected by this legislation.

MSLA fully supports the passage of this bill.