



WASHINGTON COUNTY  
FREE LIBRARY

*Where People & Possibilities Meet*

February 7, 2024

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131, House Office Building

Dear Chairman Delegate Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members,

The Washington County Free Library strongly supports **HB489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding** which would continue the periodic increases to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) per capita funding formula beyond FY 2024.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. Unlike most states, Maryland does not have a State Library making access to SLRC services critical to Maryland libraries and citizens across the state.

The importance of SLRC cannot be overstated: in FY 2023, SLRC provided over one million sessions from educational databases to public schools and libraries; these databases vary in topic, but include genealogy, language learning and legal forms specific to Maryland. One of the largest providers of database information had a massive 45% increase in cost, which SLRC had to absorb to continue providing fantastic resources.

SLRC also provides many other critical services, including housing the State's "last copy" collection. These materials allow Marylanders access to rare and historic texts relevant to Maryland history. SLRC coordinates library services around the state that are filling a critical demand for services by job seekers, small business owners, early literacy, after-school safe places, and free internet and computer access.

Library services are vital to successful schools, strong communities and adult education and we encourage passage of this important legislation to assure their continuation. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jenny L. Bakos  
Executive Director  
Washington County Free Library and Western Maryland Regional Library