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BILL NO.: SB 250

TITLE: County Public Libraries – Overdue Library Materials - Minors
SPONSOR: By Request – Departmental – State Library

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: **Letter of Information**

DATE: January 17, 2024

Baltimore County **offers this Letter of Information regarding** Senate Bill 250 – County Public Libraries – Overdue Library Materials – Minors. This legislation would prevent a county’s public library system from fining a minor for overdue library materials. Furthermore, it would prohibit a county public library system from charging a minor a replacement fee for overdue library materials until 21 days after the material’s due date. This is critical, as the American Library Association has asserted that monetary fines contribute to inequity in the library.

Baltimore County implements policies that broaden accessibility to and ensures equity in our public services and resources. The Baltimore County Public Library permanently abolished late fees for its materials in 2021 for all of its customers – minors and adults. This policy removed a barrier that blocked access to the library for the people who depend on it the most.

This change by BCPL cleared the accounts of nearly 75,000 library cardholders and allowed those with previous late fees the opportunity for a clean slate and an invitation to return to the library. While library cardholders aren’t fined by the Baltimore County Public Library for keeping items beyond the return date, they need to return overdue books to check out more items. BCPL cardholders are still responsible for replacement costs if a book is damaged or lost.

For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.