



Ways and Means Committee
HB0489 Education – State Library Resource Center – Funding
February 7, 2024

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

I am writing to ask for your **favorable support of HB0489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding**. This bill provides necessary funding for the State Library Resource center. The State Library Resource Center (SLRC) provides many important services to public and school libraries across the state, including broadband internet and digital resources. It is a highly collaborative system that maximizes return on state investment and local dollars and allows county library systems to operate most efficiently.

SLRC is an extremely well utilized, economical and cost-effective way to connect all Marylanders with a multitude of valuable services, including workforce and small business training, historical and special collections that pertain to Maryland, programs, database access and inter-library loan services. Last year SLRC loaned more than 300,000 items and facilitated 46,000 inter-library loans – an essential service that SLRC coordinates throughout the state to share books and other resources from county to county. As part of the interlibrary loan program, SLRC provides daily delivery transactions with the Eastern Shore Regional Library's delivery drivers moving an average of 50,000 aggregated library materials per annum from the eight eastern shore county libraries back and forth across the bay bridge. This is a key service for the Eastern Shore Regional Library and greatly enhances the availability of materials to Maryland citizens across the state.

Additionally, SLRC provides database access to all county public library systems throughout the state. Last year, Marylanders performed more than 10.6 million searches using high quality databases provided by SLRC. For our Eastern Shore libraries, this includes access to Peterson's Test Prep for college, career, and educational attainment, Mango foreign Languages, and Heritage Quest, our only online resource for genealogical research. Neither ESRL nor our eight county library systems could afford to provide these essential resources to our users.

Your committee's support for SLRC's current and future funding will ensure that they can provide 21st century library services and ensure that no citizen or county library system is left behind. Thank you for your past support of the State Library Resource Center's mission and funding and I ask that you favorably recommend HB0489 for passage.

Sincerely,
John C. Venditta
CEO, Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc.