

**Ways and Means Committee****HB 489 Education - State Library Resource Center - Funding****February 7, 2024**

Dear Chairman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members

I am writing to ask for your favorable support of **HB 489 Education – State Library Resource Center - Funding**. This bill provides necessary funding for the State Library Resource Center for FY2025-FY2031.

The State Library Resource Center (SLRC) provides a wealth of invaluable services to schools and public libraries across the state, including access to educational databases at no cost to them. These include Gale Educational Databases, the Heritage Quest genealogy database, and Mango Languages. Altogether, these databases were used nearly 1.5 million times by library customers and students in FY23.

SLRC provides internet connection services utilizing high speed fiber to all public libraries in Maryland as well as to 25 municipalities and government agencies throughout the state at no cost to the recipients.

Maryland Interlibrary Loan (MILO) provides pickup, delivery, and coordination of borrowing throughout the state. Anyone in the state with a library card to any public library can request books from any other library, including SLRC.

SLRC offers 70 different programs for the public on a wide variety of topics. SLRC staff will drive anywhere in the state to provide these programs to the public from any school or library, and also offer them virtually. Topics include: “National History Day Research”, “Finding Health Information Online”, and “Making a Difference: African American Women of the Civil Rights Movement.”

With a collection of nearly 1 million items, including many rare and historic items specifically relevant to Maryland, SLRC is able to provide access to materials across the state that no other library can afford to purchase and maintain.

In addition to service to the public, SLRC provides hundreds of professional trainings for library workers each year. These trainings are vital for library professionals to meet their certification requirements.

With costs for these services continuing to rise, it is vital that SLRC has the resources to continue their mission of serving all Maryland residents, students, and library professionals. On behalf of the Charles County Public Library I ask that you favorably recommend HB 489 for passage.

KennethWayne Thompson, Executive Director  
Charles County Public Library