



Testimony in FAVOR of
HB 0489 Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center- Funding
February 5, 2024

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

Kent County Public Library strongly supports **HB 489 Public Libraries – 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.

Unlike most states, Maryland does not have a State Library making access to SLRC services critical to Maryland libraries and citizens across the state. In FY 2023, SLRC reach grew as the library was visited nearly 214,000 times, answered more than 286,000 reference questions, circulated more than 345,000 items, facilitated more than 72,000 interlibrary loans transactions, and provided access to specialized databased that were searched more than 9.3 million times. Each area outside of database usage show a collective average increase of almost 30%. In addition, SLRC provided training for librarians and public programs on genealogy and Maryland history to the public which had a combined attendance of nearly 3,500 people.

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 bill.

As one of the smallest counties in Maryland, we could not be as successful without the support of the State Library Resource Center. They have provided funding for vital staff training, material delivery services, and expanded access to eBook collections. We respectfully ask for your support of SB 434, which will allow us to continue to grow our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

V/R,

Arnessa Dowell
KCPL Executive Director