

February 1, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chairwoman
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB 489 – State Library Resource Center - Funding - SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary:

I am a member of the Enoch Pratt Free Library Board of Trustees, and I strongly support **HB 489 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 2025.

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. The SLRC services are critical to Maryland libraries and to citizens across the state. The Center includes over four million items in its collection that are available to anyone in the state. In FY 23, SLRC was visited nearly 300,000 times, which represented an 119% increase of SLRC services compared to requests during FY22. The SLRC staff coordinated more than 72,000 interlibrary loans, and provided access to specialized databases that were searched more than 10.6 million times. In addition, SLRC provided 77 training sessions for library workers. Over 50 statewide classes were held and attended by 1689 Marylanders from all areas of the state.

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 ensure SLRC's future impact in Maryland.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mychelle Y. Farmer, MD

Mychelle Y. Farmer, MD
Member, Board of Trustees, Enoch Pratt Free Library
Immediate Past Chair of the Board of Trustees

cc: Members, House Ways and Means Committee