

BILL:	HB 597	DATE:	Jan 31, 2025
SUBJECT:	Public Libraries-State Library Resource Center Funding	COMMITTEE:	House Appropriations
TESTIMONY FROM:	Rachel Wright, Interim Director, Cecil County Public Library	POSITION:	Support

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Committee Members:

Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) fully supports **HB597 Public Libraries-State Library Resource Funding**.

Fully funding the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) is critical to the success of every Marylander who relies on their public, school, and/or academic libraries for access to programs, resources, materials, and information provided by SLRC.

SLRC's coordination of the inter-county materials lending service is especially important for smaller, rural systems who may be limited in the breadth and depth of materials they are able to offer their residents. Additionally, SLRC's statewide SAILOR service directly addresses the digital divide by ensuring all 24 MD municipalities receive access to high-speed broadband Internet.

As community need increases, so do the costs of providing these essential services. Therefore, additional funding is needed to ensure SLRC can continue to effectively serve library systems across the state. The current funding level of \$2.07 per state resident will not be sufficient in later years; please support per capita increases as requested for years FY27 – FY31 and beyond.

The impact of SLRC on every library system and resident of the state of MD cannot be overstated. Whether through the 324,000 items borrowed using the Statewide Interlibrary Loan Network, the 8.9 million instances of individuals accessing the Sailor Database Consortium, or the 284,000 in-person visits to SLRC's physical location at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the success of public, school, and academic libraries are dependent upon the success of SLRC. And, the success of SLRC is dependent upon it being fully funded, as prescribed in HB597.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Maryland libraries and communities.

Truly,

Rachel Wright
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