

House Appropriations Committee**HB 678 Maryland Deaf Culture Library - Funding and Budget Submission****February 25, 2025**

Dear Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your favorable support of **HB 678 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library - Funding and Budget Submission**. This bill provides much needed funding for the Maryland Deaf Culture Library (DCDL), which serves the 1.2 million Maryland residents who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Usage of DCDL services, primarily through the DCDL website (<https://www.marylanddcdl.org/>), has steadily increased in recent years, and that demand is only expected to grow in coming years. As required by law, the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) supports much of the DCDL infrastructure, such as staff positions, website maintenance, purchasing resources, and offering programs. MSLA has directed \$235,000 per year toward the DCDL, but it is projected that in FY25 that level of funding will fall \$131,000 short of what is needed. The funding request of \$450,000 annually will ensure that the DCDL can continue to serve the Deaf community without resorting to devastating cuts to programs, its digital collections, or its staffing levels. In order to maintain a basic level of service, MSLA may be forced to divert funding for other programs and services to the DCDL, further harming residents across the state.

On behalf of the Charles County Public Library and the Deaf and hard-of-hearing residents of Charles County, I ask that you favorably recommend HB 678 for passage.

KennethWayne Thompson, Executive Director
Charles County Public Library