Cecil County Public LIBRARY

BILL:	**HB678**	**DATE:**	February 21, 2025
SUBJECT:	Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) Funding and Budget Submission	**COMMITTEE:**	Appropriations
TESTIMONY FROM:	Rachel Wright, Executive Director, Cecil County Public Library	**POSITION:**	**Support**

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

Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) fully supports **HB678 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) Funding and Budget Submission.**

Fully funding the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) is critical in ensuring the 1.2 million Marylanders who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing have access to the unique and invaluable resources provided by DCDL.

MD law requires the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) to fund a DCDL coordinator, maintain a website, purchase and provide resources, deliver staff training, offer programs, and to establish an Advisory Board and a Friends organization to meet the specialized information needs of the Deaf or hard-of-hearing community.

As community need increases, so to have the costs of providing these essential services. Since FY15, MSLA has allocated $235,000 in general funds to support DCDL personnel and other resources. Considering all that DCDL does and provides to the Deaf or hard-of-hearing community, it is no surprise that their current expenses exceed the current budget allocation and that these costs are projected to increase. Additional funding is needed to ensure DCDL continues to provide the essential services this community relies on daily. MSLA is proposing an annual funding bill of $450,000 to ensure these Marylanders are not left behind.

Access to vital information and resources in accessible formats is a value held by every library. Without additional funding, the services to Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community will undoubtedly suffer – whether through the reduction of programs, staffing, and collections, or of the critical training required to ensure the Deaf or hard-of-hearing community is adequately served. Additionally, inadequate funding may impact the entirety of the MD community, as MSLA could be forced to reallocate funds from other essential programs to make up for any gaps in DCDL funding.

Therefore, we respectfully request your full support of **HB678 Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) Funding and Budget Submission**.

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

Truly,

Rachel Wright

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