



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB 378 - State Library Agency - Family Literacy Pilot Program -  
Establishment**

SB 378 aims to establish the Family Literacy Pilot Program to enable certain incarcerated individuals to read aloud to their children or grandchildren through preparation of a recording.

This bill aims to increase literacy in households and improve connections within families that are facing separation due to incarceration. A near majority of incarcerated individuals have children, and often children who have parent(s) absent due to incarceration face struggles in obtaining adequate literacy. This program has been enacted and shown success in twenty other states throughout the United States.

SB 378 in establishment of the Family Literacy Pilot Program takes in account:

- The program will be run by the Maryland State Library Agency, in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Correctional Education Council.
- The program will have the Maryland State Library Agency curate a collection of books to be provided within the program, with the requirement of at least some bilingual books as well as books in foreign languages.
- The recording and book paired together will be provided to the child (or grandchild) at no charge to the parent during the administering of the pilot program.
- The program will be delivered efficiently with prison librarians who will guide inmates in choosing a book appropriate to their child or grandchild's age and will facilitate distribution of the book and recording to the child or grandchild.
- The program has a requirement of written permission for the parent or guardian for their child to participate in the Family Literacy Pilot Program.
- The program will be required to serve each region in Maryland in the administration of the limitation of four libraries in prisons; and provide the program to at least one institution housing male inmates, and at least one institution housing female inmates.

In conclusion, SB 378 will improve both the literacy rates of incarcerated individuals and their children struggling in schools, while facilitating strengthened familial bonds in households with incarcerated parent(s).

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 378.