

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman

Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: SB378- State Library Agency- Family Literacy Pilot Program -Establishment**

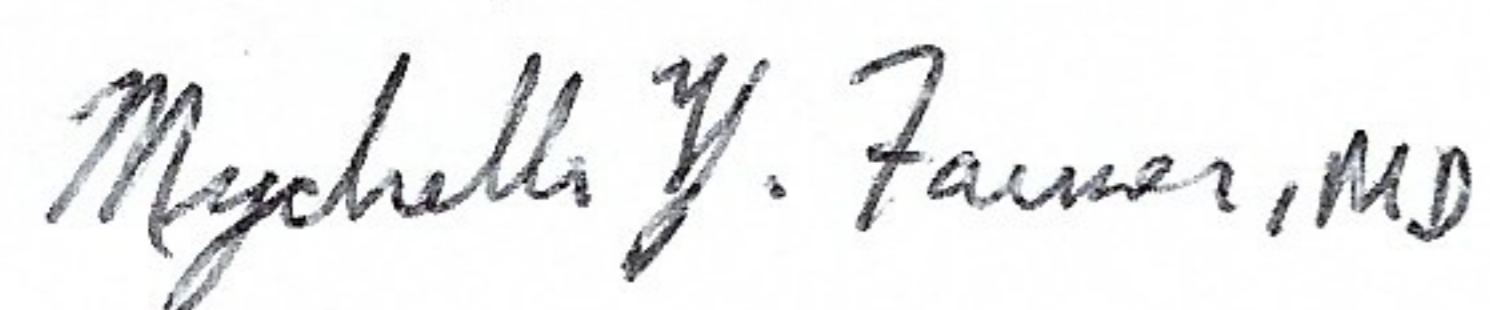
Dear Chair Feldman:

I am writing to affirm my support for SB378, to establish the Family Literacy Pilot Program in Maryland. The legislation creates a family literacy partnership between the Maryland State Library Agency and the State Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. This will be a three-year pilot program, to be introduced at four correctional facilities, located in various areas throughout the state. Program participants, who are parents of young children, will be allowed to prepare a recording as they read aloud selected children's books. The recording will be shared with their children. I believe this program will be of great benefit to inmates' families, by promoting positive interaction between children and their parents.

Nationwide, 47% of incarcerated individuals are parents, and nearly 1 in 5 of these children are less than five years of age.<sup>1</sup> This finding is probably applicable to Maryland's 32,000 inmates. Since many children throughout Maryland are adversely affected by incarceration of a parent, such recordings strengthen parent-child relationships and will promote family unity.

The Maryland State Library Agency will administer this program, to ensure the selection of children's books that are both age-appropriate and consistent with the inmate's literacy level. Both male and female inmates will participate in this program. As the vice-chair of the Maryland State Library Board, I am confident that the program will be of highest quality. I favor this bill because it will provide great benefits to families separated due to incarceration.

Sincerely,



Mychelle Y. Farmer, MD

Vice Chair, Maryland State Library Board

Cc: Senator A. Washington

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<sup>1</sup> Wang L, Both sides of the bar: how mass incarceration punishes families, Prison Policy Initiative, 2022 accessed online: [Both sides of the bars: How mass incarceration punishes families | Prison Policy Initiative](#)