



Testimony on Maryland HB0415 (FAV)

FROM: Karen Earp, Youth Services Manager, Wicomico Public Library

TO: Delegates Palakovich Carr and Amprey, and members of the committee

DATE: February 5, 2024

My name is Karen Earp, and I am the Youth Services Manager at the Sarbanes Branch of Wicomico Public Library, in Salisbury Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the Family Literacy Pilot Program. I am testifying to share information about the Storybook Program that I have run in Salisbury since April 2024.

First, please allow me to share how our program works. We partner with the Wicomico County Correctional Center, who purchased recordable storybooks and teddy bears. They select up to five participants each week. I meet the participants in their library. I help them record their books, listen to them, and re-record as needed. At the library, I put packages together, including extra books and toys if there are multiple children in the home. I then mail them via Priority Mail, which helps remove any barriers to getting to the library so they can receive their books.

I have received overwhelmingly positive feedback. My main contact in the Correctional Center has asked that we continue the program into the next fiscal year. Families have reached out to share how much they appreciate the program. Every person I work with in the facility thanks me. I will be presenting sessions at upcoming state and national library conferences about the program, showing that there is both statewide and national interest in programs like this.

Thank you for reading my testimony and for considering such positive and impactful legislation. Expanding what we are doing in Wicomico to the rest of the state would help so many people. Your consideration of this matter is highly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Karen Earp

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