



House Appropriations
HB 1592 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding
March 18, 2026
SUPPORT

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

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) strongly supports **HB 1592 Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding**. The state funding provided in this budget is critical to the success of Maryland's public libraries and the communities they serve. The bill will extend modest per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY2032. Without this extension, libraries may be forced to make substantial cuts, including reducing programs, services, collections, and operating hours. At a time when we are seeing attempts to disinvest in libraries at the federal level, it is crucial that Maryland continue its strong support for public libraries.

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. PGCMLS receives approximately 25% of its operating funds from the state. Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services (operating expenditures) for county library systems has outpaced inflation (31.8%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm), increasing 42% (\$261,190,270 in FY 2014 and \$370,982,846 in FY 2024) in county library systems, and has increased 37% (\$6,662,332 in FY 2014 and \$9,134,334 in FY 2024) in the regional resource centers. SB378 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032 at an annual rate of increase of 3% for regionals and 3.21% for county library systems. Extending the state share cycle ensures libraries can continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands, including growing needs for internet access and ebooks.

Level funding after Fiscal Year 2027 would substantially and negatively impact public libraries across the state, including those in Prince George's County. More than 3.3 million Marylanders hold public library cards, including 643,523 PGCMLS cardholders. These Marylanders borrow over 53 million items from public libraries yearly, of which over 3.5 million were borrowed in Prince George's County last fiscal year. PGCMLS depends on the state aid administered through MSLA to supplement our local funding. State aid is critical to maintaining our operations across our nineteen branches. **PGCMLS supports the passage of HB 1592 - Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding as proposed.**

Sincerely,

Mark Winston, Ph. D. CEO