



**DATE:** March 16, 2026

**BILL:** **HB 1592** – Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding/Public Libraries – Young Readers Grant Program, Funding and Services

**COMMITTEE:** Appropriations

**TESTIMONY FROM:** Mary Hastler, CEO  
Harford County Public Library

**POSITION:** **Support**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee

I am writing in support of HB 1592 which is intended to extend per capita increases for the regional centers and county libraries through fiscal year 2032. In addition, the amendments further update the statutory list of library services to reflect areas pertaining to early literacy, information literacy, digital equity and critical services.

These funding increases will sustain the important work that libraries perform in your local communities. Maryland Public Libraries provide robust access to a wide range of services to support lifelong learning, from developing a love of reading and early literacy skills for infants and preschool children – hosting 84,576 programs and classes for ages birth through five in 2024, with a total attendance of 2,171,049 (enough to fill Camden Yards 47 times over!) and providing a wide range of adult programs including workforce development, legal aid and technology assistance.

Support for the regional resource centers are vital to providing these services in small and rural counties, including eBooks, quality databases, and audio and video content, and providing opportunities for our children, families and communities.

Over the past decade, the increasing costs of providing library services has outpaced inflation and extending the increases of the state share allows us provide a level playing field for some of our most vulnerable communities. We respectfully ask that you fund public libraries and regional libraries at a level that will ensure sustaining equity and access throughout Maryland to our families and communities.

On behalf of the Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees, Library Staff and our community, **we strong support HB 1592 – Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding/Public Libraries – Young Readers Grant Program, Funding and Services.**