



House Bill 1592

Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 18, 2026

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1592. This bill would update the minimum required state and local funding for libraries and would better align the State's financial support to recognize the expanded role libraries play.

Libraries and regional resource centers increasingly serve growing purposes for Maryland's communities. Maryland's families seek these unique public institutions for educational and childcare support, access to technological resources and high-quality internet, labor and employment aid, and cultural enrichment. In essence, libraries and regional resource centers are a critical nexus of resources, community engagement, and enrichment unique to other community infrastructure – and the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the need for maintaining and deepening the role they play in Maryland's communities. In short, our libraries and regional resource centers serve many more purposes for their communities than their original charge.

With an expanded purpose, however, comes greater need, which counties deeply understand. Local governments have long histories of exceeding mandated funding requirements and equipping public libraries with financial and operational support more than these requirements. They proudly do so because they know the success of local governments hinges on that of the families and communities they serve. Unfortunately, state support has lagged behind that provided by local governments, despite the growing need. HB 1592 offers an opportunity for the State to, once again, increase its financial support of these critical facilities to maintain levels of support that recognize the financial needs of libraries today.

Counties welcome increased partnership and support from the State, especially at a time when libraries and regional resource centers are serving new and evolving roles in their communities that necessitate deeper investment. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 1592 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.