BILL:	**HB 1592**	**DATE:**	**March 16, 2026**
SUBJECT:	Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Library Funding/Public Libraries - Young Readers Matching Grant Program, Funding, and Services	**COMMITTEE:**	Appropriations
TESTIMONY: **FROM:**	KennethWayne Thompson, Executive Director, Charles County Public Library	**POSITION:**	**Support**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the Committee:

The Charles County Public Library (CCPL) **supports HB1592 - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding/Public Libraries - Young Readers Matching Grant Program, Funding, and Services**. The bill extends per capita funding increases for Maryland's three Regional Library Resource centers and the state's twenty-four local county library systems through FY32.

CCPL, like all library systems across the state, benefits greatly from this funding. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of their operating funds from the state. The Regional Resource Centers provide county systems with resources that we wouldn't be able to pay for on our own, such as materials ordering, cataloging, administration and maintenance of our library system software, and access to ebooks and e-audiobooks. With the current funding cycle expiring at the end of FY27, HB1592 ensures funding increases of 3% annually for regionals and 3.21% for county library systems from FY28-FY32. Without these increases, local libraries will need to make difficult choices about reducing services to the public. In the wake of federal job losses, a challenging job market and inflation, community members are relying on public libraries more than ever for job searching, career changes, and affordable entertainment.

Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services in county libraries has increased 42%, which has far outpaced the 31% rate of inflation. Much of the added expense has gone toward salaries and wages to ensure that we have well-qualified and trained staff to serve our public. These increases put more strain on our ability to give the public popular services such as providing WiFi; STEM, career guidance, computer training, and children's storytime programs; crucial outreach to the community via our Mobile Library and Outreach Van; and acting as a passport application acceptance agency. CCPL directly benefits from the Young Readers Matching Grant by helping to support our

Imagination Library of Charles County program. This initiative sends free books monthly to children ages 0-5 in partnership with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, boosting early literacy by creating a home library for each child in the program.

I respectfully ask that you adequately fund our regional and county public libraries by supporting HB1592. Thank you for considering.

The Charles County Public Library supports the passage of HB1592.

Sincerely,

KennethWayne Thompson

Executive Director, Charles County Public Library