

HB1592_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
03/18/2026
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Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#1592 – FAVORABLE

Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding

TO: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1592, Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding

The National Endowment for the Humanities magazine Humanities has discussed *The Complicated Role of the Modern Public Library*¹

There aren't many truly public places left in America. Most of our shared spaces require money or a certain social status to access. Malls exist to sell people things. Museums discourage loiterers. Coffee shops expect patrons to purchase a drink or snack if they want to enjoy the premises. One place, though, remains open to everybody. The public library requires nothing of its visitors: no purchases, no membership fees, no dress code. You can stay all day, and you don't have to buy anything. You don't need money or a library card to access a multitude of on-site resources that include books, e-books and magazines, job-hunting assistance, computer stations, free Wi-Fi, and much more. And the library will never share or sell your personal data.

In a country riven by racial, ethnic, political, and socioeconomic divides, libraries still welcome everyone. ... That commitment to inclusivity, along with a persistent ability to adapt to changing times, has kept public libraries vital in an era of divisive politics and disruptive technological change.

In recognition of the roles libraries can play in Maryland, this bill will alter the calculation of certain funding for certain regional resource centers and each county public library system for certain fiscal years; alter the types of services of which each public library is required to offer at least one service to include programs to increase early childhood literacy and learning, school readiness, literacy proficiency, and student success, an education program to advance information literacy, and an initiative that increases digital equity and access to the Internet; etc.

Maryland citizens need these resources and Maryland values require the financial support needed to have them available to all our residents.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass HB1592.

¹ <https://www.neh.gov/article/complicated-role-modern-public-library#:~:text=In%20an%20update%20of%20Carnegie's%20idea%2C%20Klinenberg,the%20poor%2C%20the%20homeless%20and%20young%20people.%E2%80%9D>