



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

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March 11, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of House Bill 1592: Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding**

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

I am pleased to write in support of House Bill 1592, which strengthens Maryland's public library system by increasing per capita funding for regional resource centers and county library systems and modernizing required service offerings. This legislation represents a thoughtful investment in educational access, workforce readiness, and community well-being across our State.

HB 1592 increases per capita State aid beginning in fiscal year 2028, with phased increases through fiscal 2032. Under the bill, funding for regional resource centers rises by \$0.30 per capita in fiscal 2028 and by \$1.59 by fiscal 2032, while local public library systems receive an increase of \$0.61 per capita in fiscal 2028 and \$3.27 by fiscal 2032. These targeted increases will help libraries maintain essential services while expanding programming that supports literacy, workforce development, digital access, and mental health supports for residents.

The fiscal analysis indicates that statewide general fund expenditures will increase by approximately \$1.9 million in fiscal 2028 and \$8.0 million by fiscal 2031 as the funding adjustments phase in. Importantly, these investments directly benefit local communities, as State aid to local library systems is projected to increase by the same amounts during that period. For example, Howard County alone is estimated to receive an additional \$97,491 in fiscal 2028 and \$197,338 by fiscal 2031 under the revised formula.

In addition to strengthening funding, HB 1592 updates statutory service requirements so that libraries must provide at least one qualifying service in areas such as early childhood literacy, technology skills, workforce development, digital equity, emergency response support, or mental health and well-being. These updates align State law with how modern libraries already serve communities—as educational hubs, technology access points, and trusted neighborhood resources. Notably, most of these services are already offered statewide, meaning this provision is not expected to materially affect local expenditures.

Public libraries are among the most cost-effective public investments we can make. They support students, job seekers, entrepreneurs, seniors, and families alike, while strengthening community resilience and access to opportunity. By responsibly increasing funding and ensuring flexibility in



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service delivery, House Bill 1592 helps libraries continue meeting evolving community needs without imposing undue fiscal strain on local governments.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and for your continued commitment to Maryland's residents and communities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Ball', is written over a horizontal line.

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive