



March 16, 2026

Chair Ben Barnes, Vice Chair Anne Kaiser, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

Re: Support for HB 1592 – Public Libraries – Young Readers Matching Grant Program, Funding, and Services

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

On behalf of Wicomico Public Library, I respectfully submit this letter in support of HB 1592.


This bill is important because it continues the scheduled State funding increases for county library systems and regional resource centers beyond FY 2027, helping libraries avoid a flat-funding cliff while costs and public demand continue to rise. It also updates State law to better reflect the services public libraries now provide every day, including early literacy and school readiness, information literacy, workforce and technology instruction, digital access, emergency response, and support for mental health and personal well-being.

For Wicomico Public Library, reliable State support is essential to maintaining the core services our community depends on. Public libraries are expected to do more each year: support young readers and families, provide free internet and technology access, assist job seekers and small businesses, offer educational and cultural programming, and serve as trusted community spaces in times of disruption and need. These responsibilities have expanded significantly, even as operating costs for staffing, collections, technology, and facilities continue to grow.

HB 1592 recognizes both realities: that Maryland libraries need stable, predictable funding, and that the modern public library is a vital educational and civic institution. Continued State investment will help libraries sustain the services residents count on while allowing us to respond to changing community needs.

Wicomico Public Library appreciates the Committee's consideration and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 1592.

Sincerely,


Seth Hershberger, Director
Wicomico Public Library