



WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY

Where People & Possibilities Meet

March 18, 2026

Delegate Barnes, Chairman
Appropriations Committee

Dear Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and Committee members,

The Washington County Free Library supports **HB1592– Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding/Public Libraries – Young Readers Matching Grant Program, Funding and Services.**

Maryland public libraries depend on state operating funds to sustain essential services, including staff, infrastructure, technology, and community programs. While county library systems receive an average of 18% of their funding from Maryland, Washington County Free Library relies on the state for approximately 21% of its operating budget, making continued and predictable state investment especially critical to our ability to serve the community.

The current state funding cycle expires at the end of FY2027. Without action, libraries will face flat funding despite rising costs and increasing public demand. HB1592 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032, allowing libraries to continue meeting operating costs and public service needs. Without this extension, library systems may be forced to reduce programs, services, and operating hours – directly impacting Maryland residents.

At a time when libraries are experiencing growing demand for public programs, digital, resources, Wi-Fi access, and community services, this legislation provides stability, sustainability, and equity across Maryland's library systems.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB1592 and continued investment in Maryland's public libraries and regional resource centers.

Sincerely,

Jenny L. Bakos
Executive Director
Washington County Free Library