



**Appropriations Committee**

**HB 1592 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding / Public Libraries –  
Young Readers Matching Grant Program, Funding, and Services**

**March 18, 2026**

**Support**

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

I am writing in **support of HB 1592 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding / Public Libraries – Young Readers Matching Grant Program, Funding, and Services**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY32. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local communities.

Public Libraries, and the Regional Libraries that support them, are instrumental in maintaining connections for people all across the state. Regional libraries in particular provide equity of service to rural counties that otherwise would not be able to afford the same level of services offered in the more urban and populous counties. For example, the Western Maryland Regional Library (WMRL) provides the catalog system, online books and videos, web site development and maintenance, and delivery services to Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties.

As living costs continue to rise, Maryland libraries of all sizes continue to provide robust access to books, the internet and other technology, programs, and services for every member of the community. However, it is the rural libraries that suffer the most during economic downturns and it is the Regional libraries that are there to fill the void. Last year WMRL provided over \$1,383,863 in direct support and services to Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties. Over the past decade, costs to operate the Regional libraries have increased 37%. It is vital that our funding keeps pace with the inflation rate as much as possible to keep our rural libraries and their communities from falling behind.

The Maryland legislature has demonstrated over time its support of libraries and the critical role they play in the education and overall welfare of their communities. We ask that you continue this support during these extraordinary times when the citizens of Maryland need our services more than ever and back the passage of HB 1592.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth M. Hulett".

Elizabeth M. Hulett

Director

Western Maryland Regional Library