



# Dorchester County Public Library

Central Branch  
303 Gay Street  
Cambridge, MD 21613

Hurlock Branch  
222 S. Main Street  
Hurlock, MD 21643

**BILL:** SB 378

**SUBJECT:** Education – Regional Resources and County Libraries - Funding

**SUBMITTED BY:** Crystal Henningsen, Director, Dorchester County Public Library

**DATE:** February 9, 2026

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget & Taxation Subcommittee

**POSITION:** Support

Dear Chair Senator Guzzone, Vice Chair Senator Rosapepe and members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 378 – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding which is intended to extend per capita increases for the county libraries and regional resources centers through FY32. These funding increases will help sustain the important services that public libraries provide in your local communities.

Maryland libraries provide access to a wide range of services to support lifelong learning. Over the last decade, Maryland public libraries have supported babies and preschool children through 29,742 programs that reached 886,277 attendees. These programs helped young patrons become school ready and set them up for success. Libraries also provided their communities with access to free legal aid, social workers, food pantries, and tax assistance.

Over the past decade, the increasing costs of providing library services (42%) has outpaced inflation (31.8%), driven largely by the increased costs of salaries and wages to ensure that libraries are staffed sufficiently to provide this wide range of services in our communities. Extending the increases of the state share allows libraries to continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands.

Support for the regional resource centers is also vital to providing these services in small and rural counties. The Eastern Shore Regional Library provides a host of benefits to residents of Dorchester County that the local library would not be able to provide on our own, including more than \$500,000 worth of eBooks, premium databases, and audio and video content. The Regional Library is also vital in administering collection management software, providing materials delivery, and providing a wealth of professional development opportunities.

We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain our role in supporting equity and access in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Crystal Henningsen".

Crystal Henningsen  
Director  
Dorchester County Public Library