

SB378 - Letter of support - Regional and public fu

Uploaded by: Andrea Berstler

Position: FAV

SB378 Education- Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries- Funding

Bill Name: Per Capita Funding

Sponsor(s): Sen. Guy Guzzone

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 11th at 2pm

Committee: Senate, Budget & Taxation Subcommittee

Testimony Due: Monday, February 9th by 6pm

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB 378 Education – Regional Resource Centers and Libraries – Funding**

This funding is critical for the important work being done by MD libraries. On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our over 101,000 regular card holders and the numerous visitors who stop by one of our 7 public service outlets, I respectfully urge you to support the funding levels in Senate Bill 378.

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of operating funds from the state. Regionals receive approximately 22% of operating funds from the state.

Library services have significantly evolved over the last decade, and funding is necessary for libraries to keep pace with increasing demand. Between 2014 and 2024 (the last year for which data is available

- The number of public programs has risen by 32% and program attendance has risen by 21%, from 1,788,330 to 2,171,049; enough to fill M & T stadium 30 times over
- In 2024, Marylanders accessed free public WiFi nearly 24 million times at public libraries, an increase of 657%, or more than 20 million more uses than in 2014.
- Maryland public libraries now offer nearly 4 million e-books, an increase of 1480% since 2014.

Libraries did all of this while experiencing a near 31% increase in costs and 57% increase in salary expenses – which provided an average 2.9% yearly increase for salary.

Your support of SB378 will also ensure Maryland's regional libraries can continue providing these important digital services in addition to necessary training, IT, technical services, and material delivery for the rural areas of our state who need that support. Without the support of these regional libraries, many of our peer libraries in Maryland will not be able to meet their community's needs and would face significant cuts to their current public services.

Maryland's libraries have always been responsible stewards of our state funding, consistently doing more with less. We respectfully ask that you fund public and regional libraries at a level that will allow us to sustain, if not expand, our role in supporting equity and access in our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea

Andrea Berstler
Executive Director

FAV SB0378 Regional Resource Center Funding SMRLA

Uploaded by: Ashley Teagle

Position: FAV

February 9, 2026

Senator Guzzone, Chair
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of **SB0378 – Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries--Funding**. This bill will provide per capita funding increases to both regional resource centers like the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) and public libraries around the state. Between FY 2025 and FY 2026, SMRLA's budget from the State increased by \$99,700. This increased funding helps SMRLA maintain services to the libraries in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties.

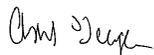
As Southern Maryland grows so does the demand for library services. This fiscal year, SMRLA was able to absorb increased costs for our services thanks to the per capita increase. For example, our materials delivery service which runs five days a week to eleven library branches throughout Southern Maryland increased in cost this year. By changing vendors, SMRLA was able to negotiate more predictable rate increases over a three-year period. Although these increases are reasonable, the cost of this service has generally gone up over time.

Looking ahead to FY 2027, I am aware of at least \$71,000 in anticipated increased costs. These increased costs are attributed to current vendor relationships that support our services. If SMRLA's per capita increase did not happen in FY 2027, we would have to pull back on investment in special projects and new initiatives for our public library partners.

A year without a funding increase would effectively be a budget cut for us. Our patrons have come to rely on and to expect high quality library service in Southern Maryland. In SMRLA's case, this is only possible because of the generous support that we receive from the State. As a regional library, we do not have a source of funding from the counties we serve. This makes per capita funding increases especially important to us.

Thank you for your favorable vote on SB0378.

Sincerely,



Ashley Teagle, CEO

SB 378, Regional Resource Centers and County Libra

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman

Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SB 378, Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries, Funding

Dear Chair Feldman,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for Senate Bill 378, Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries, Funding, which is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. This bill strengthens and stabilizes funding for institutions that serve as frontline access points for education, workforce development, and family support, particularly for immigrant and low income communities.

Public libraries and regional resource centers play a critical role in reducing educational and economic disparities. According to the American Library Association, libraries are among the most trusted institutions for digital access, adult literacy, English language learning, and job search assistance. In Maryland, libraries provide essential services such as English classes, citizenship preparation, homework support, and access to computers and broadband for families who may lack reliable internet at home. The Pew Research Center reports that Hispanic adults are significantly more likely than White adults to rely on public access points for internet connectivity, underscoring the importance of sustained investment in these spaces.

SB 378 recognizes that these services cannot be sustained through unstable or piecemeal funding. By strengthening state support for regional resource centers and county libraries, the bill helps ensure continuity of programming, staffing capacity, and outreach in communities where demand is highest. This is especially important as libraries increasingly function as de facto service hubs for immigrant families navigating education systems, workforce transitions, and public benefits.

Implications for Latino and immigrant Marylanders

For Latino and immigrant families, SB 378 expands opportunity by reinforcing access to education, language acquisition, and digital tools that are foundational to economic mobility. Stable library and resource center funding supports adult learners seeking credentials, parents supporting children in school, and workers building new skills. MLU can amplify these outcomes by partnering with libraries and regional centers to expand culturally responsive programming, multilingual outreach, and connections to workforce and civic education initiatives that strengthen long term community stability.

MLU urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 378.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

Maryland Latinos Unidos

corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org

Calvert Library_Support_SB 378_Regional and County

Uploaded by: Carrie Willson

Position: FAV



Inspiring possibility ✦ calvertlibrary.info

Carrie Willson, Executive Director • carrie.willson@calvertlibrary.info
850 Costley Way • Prince Frederick, MD 20678 • 410-535-0291 • 301-855-1862

BILL:	SB378	DATE:	February 11, 2026
SUBJECT:	Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries -- Funding	COMMITTEE:	Budget and Taxation
TESTIMONY FROM:	Carrie Willson, Executive Director, Calvert Library	POSITION:	Support

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

I am writing in support of **SB 378 – Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding**, which provides modest per-capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and public library systems for FY2028–FY2032. This funding is essential to sustain the critical work public libraries provide across Maryland.

Calvert Library continues to feel the impact of challenging county budgets alongside growing community needs. During the pandemic, we invested in hotspots and Chromebooks to ensure residents could stay connected to work, school, and community—and that demand remains strong. Every day, our staff help customers build digital and information literacies, apply for jobs online, use downloadable resources, and access both physical and digital materials. Our public school teachers rely on students’ Calvert Library cards, which grant access to reliable information, primary sources, and a robust collection of downloadable books.

The Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) and the other regional libraries are invaluable to Maryland’s rural counties. SMRLA provides our shared digital collection in Libby, professional development, IT software and support, cataloging and processing services, and daily delivery among the eleven locations in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s Counties. By centralizing these back-office operations, local libraries can focus resources on direct public service—an efficient model that yields an exceptional return on investment for Marylanders.

On behalf of the Board of Library Trustees, our dedicated staff, and our 35,000+ active cardholders, I respectfully urge a **favorable report on SB 378**.

Sincerely,

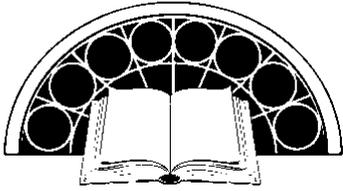
Carrie Willson
Executive Director, Calvert Library



SB378_Dorchester-1.pdf

Uploaded by: Crystal Henningsen

Position: FAV



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

Testimony in Support of SB378_MCPL.pdf

Uploaded by: Darcell Graham

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Darcell Graham
Director

BILL: SB 378 Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries Funding **DATE:** February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Regional Resource Centers and County **COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget & Taxation

TESTIMONY: Darcell Graham, Director **POSITION:** Support
Montgomery County Public Libraries

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

I am writing to express my strong support for SB378, which extends per capita funding increases for Maryland's county libraries and regional resource centers through FY2032.

Libraries are the heartbeat of Maryland communities—providing equitable access to information and connecting people to knowledge and opportunity. They deliver essential services for all ages, from early literacy programs for infants and preschoolers to adult resources such as health information, tax assistance, legal aid, and technology support. These funding adjustments are critical to sustaining the vital work libraries perform across our state.

Demand for library services continues to grow. Residents rely on libraries for connectivity, meeting spaces, and educational opportunities—whether for essential needs or lifelong learning. Meanwhile, operating costs for library services have nearly doubled over the past decade. Without SB378, funding will remain flat after FY2027, forcing cuts to programs, hours, and services.

At a time of federal disinvestment, it is vital for Maryland to reaffirm its commitment to equity and access for all families and communities.

On behalf of Montgomery County Public Libraries, I respectfully urge your YES vote on SB378 to keep Maryland libraries strong and sustainable for generations to come.

Darcell Graham
Director
Montgomery County Public Libraries

Senate SB378_Ed_Goyda_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Ed Goyda

Position: FAV



SOMERSET
COUNTY LIBRARY
The Heart of the Community

BILL: SB 378

DATE: February 9, 2026

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

**COMMITTEE: Senate Budget & Taxation
Subcommittee**

**SUBMITTED BY: Ed Goyda, Director,
Somerset County Library**

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 work that libraries perform in your local communities.

Maryland libraries provide robust access to a wide range of services to support lifelong learning, from developing a love of reading and early literacy skills for infants and pre-school children – hosting nearly 30,000 programs for ages birth through five, with total attendance of 900,000 – to providing a wide range of adult programs including workforce training, tax assistance, legal aid, and technology 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 us 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 Somerset County that the local library will 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 our 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.

The Somerset County Library supports the passage of this budget item.

Sincerely,

Ed Goyda
Director
Somerset County Library

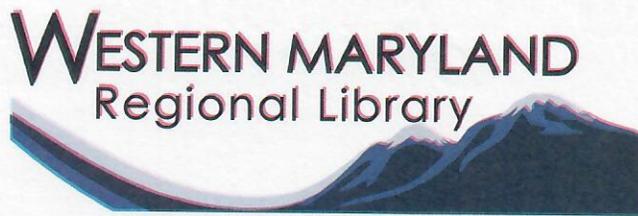
Crisfield • Princess Anne • Ewell

11767 Beechwood Street, Princess Anne, MD 21853
410-651-0852
somelibrary.org

SB 378 - Regional Resource Centers and County Libr

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Hulett

Position: FAV



Budget and Taxation Committee

SB 378 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding

February 11, 2026

Support

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

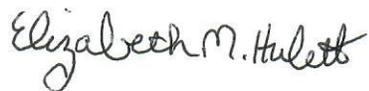
I am writing in **support of SB 378 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding**. The bill will extend per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY32. These funding increases will help sustain the important work being done in your local 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 SB 378.

Sincerely,

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

Elizabeth M. Hulett

Director

Western Maryland Regional Library

Citizens for Maryland Libraries support of SB378.p

Uploaded by: James DeArmey

Position: FAV



February 9, 2026

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone
Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Maryland Senate Bill 378: Educational Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding

Senator Guzzone,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors and the members of Citizens for Maryland Libraries to support Senate Bill 378.

Citizens for Maryland Libraries is a nonprofit organization that works to support positive legislation and funding for Maryland's libraries. We exist because we firmly believe that libraries are part of the foundation of a free, open, and educated society.

While our association supports this bill entirely, these points stand out:

- Library funding has not matched the increase in costs. In order to maintain the current level of service. Increased funding would allow libraries to continue existing services.
- The cost of e-books and downloadable audiobooks has also risen. This reduces the ability of libraries to provide service in an increasingly digital age. This is an issue for all library users but particularly those who have vision, hearing or mobility limitations.
- Service to the regional libraries in Southern Maryland, the Eastern Shore, and Western Maryland is critical. Libraries in those areas truly need support in order to provide service that is on par with that of Maryland citizens in more well-funded areas.

Maryland libraries are known nationwide for service, education and innovation. Our organization and all Maryland citizens thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

James (Jim) DeArmey, Executive Director
Citizens for Maryland Libraries
P. O. Box 552
Ellicott City, MD 21043

SB378 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: James Kelly

Position: FAV



BILL: SB378

DATE: February 9, 2026

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

**COMMITTEE: Senate Budget
and Taxation Committee**

**SUBMITTED BY: James Kelly,
Director, Frederick County
Public Libraries**

POSITION: Support

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

Frederick County Public Libraries (FCPL) supports **SB378** which provides critical funding to libraries across Maryland, including our own.

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating revenue to support collections, services, and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of their operating funds from the state. For Regional library systems, that figure is closer to 22%.

The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27. Extending the state share cycle ensures that libraries can continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands.

Last year, Frederick County Public Libraries saw 3 million visitors who borrowed over 5.1 million items, these figures were the highest in FCPL's history. We are on pace to surpass those totals in FY26. Keeping up with community demand for service would not be possible without the support we receive from the state.



FREDERICK
COUNTY
**PUBLIC
LIBRARIES**

For individuals and families working to stay within their budgets, free programs, family events, and learning opportunities at the library offer real relief. Every dollar saved by borrowing books and other materials for free from the library becomes a dollar freed to put groceries on the table.

Frederick County Public Libraries supports the passage of this budget item.

Sincerely,

James Kelly
Director
Frederick County Public Libraries

Director
James Kelly

Administrative Offices
110 East Patrick Street, Frederick, MD 21701
P 301.600.1613 F 301.600.3789 www.fcpl.org

SB 378 Education - Regional Resource Centers and C

Uploaded by: Janet Salazar

Position: FAV



Centreville Branch: 121 S. Commerce St., Centreville MD 21617
410.758.0980
Kent Island Branch: 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD 21666
410.643.8161

BILL: **SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding** **DATE:** **Feb. 11, 2026**
SUBJECT: Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - funding **COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation
TESTIMONY FROM: Janet Salazar, Director **POSITION:** **Support**

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee:

Queen Anne’s County Library supports **SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding**

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of operating funds from the state.

The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27, after which the Queen Anne’s County Library (QACL) and our regional resource center, the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL) will receive flat funding. SB387 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032 at an annual increase of 3% for ESRL and 3.21% for QACL. Without this extension, QACL and ESRL will be forced to make complex decisions that reduce the number of programs, services, operating hours, and staff available to help our community. It is critical for the state to maintain its support for our libraries.

Library services have significantly evolved over the last decade, and funding is necessary for QACL to keep pace with increasing demand. Between FY22 – FY25, the number of public programs offered by QACL increased by 89%, from 407 programs offered to 889. Program attendance also increased from 11,140 in FY 22 to 15,507 in FY 25. Public Wi-Fi use, a valuable service our community needs and uses, increased 43% from FY 23 – FY25. Our community’s use of digital formats has steadily increased as well; 35% from FY 24 to FY25.

Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services, our operating expenditures, has outpaced inflation – increasing by 42% for county library systems and 37% for regionals, compared to the 31% overall inflation rate. The largest factor across both conditions was the increased costs of salaries and wages. The demand for digital formats continues to rise as does the costs of e-materials, outpacing the scheduled funding increases.

QACL supplements the eroding social safety network. Our spaces are open to everyone and allow our community members a place to be when they have nowhere to go. QACL regularly provides access to health services and social services at our library branches through our partnerships with the QAC Health Department to regularly do health screenings and with the QAC Department of Social Services to allow some of their staff to offer services at our branches. We also partner with Eastern Shore Pro Bono to offer legal help to our community members who need it but may not be able to afford it. These types of partnerships are made possible through funding our library system.

As living costs continue to rise, QACL continues to provide robust access to books, the internet and other technology, buildings, programs, and services for every member of our community. Our library has thirty hotspots and ten Chromebooks available to check out for those in our community who don’t have access to the

internet or need a computer to work on from home. With access to a working computer and the internet, our community members can access job resources, write and send their resumes, apply for jobs and attend educational opportunities they would not otherwise be able to. When adults can access essential 21st century tools, they are competitive in the job market and can start to break the cycles of poverty.

Continued funding to support small and rural libraries through State Aid and the Regional Resource Centers is critical to support our community. QACL can provide access to homework help and tutoring through Brainfuse, which we are able to offer to our community through competitive pricing negotiated by ESRL. Funding for ESRL allows our smaller Eastern Shore public libraries to access databases and other resources at a lower cost than if each of our systems contracted separately with each vendor. We can support individuals looking for jobs or learning new skills through our Gale Courses and Test and Career Prep. Without access to these databases for free, many in our community would not have access to better jobs or be able to learn new skills to get better jobs.

QACL provides early childhood learning and family engagement to our community. In FY 25, QACL was able to present 254 birth-to-five early childhood learning programs focusing on early literacy training, socialization, physical education and learning about the world around us. These programs were attended by 3,562 children aged birth – 5 and 2,993 adults. In addition, the Library was able to provide 121 programs targeting children 6-10 years old that focused on reading engagement, science, art, learning the art of strategy, and technology, to better prepare our children for the world that awaits them in the future. These programs reached 1,231 students and 765 adults. We were also able to support children who are struggling to read by providing the Book Buddies program in our elementary school. The Book Buddies program trains volunteers to read a portion of a book to students during their lunch period once a week for four weeks. At the end of the program, each student chose a book to keep and take home with them to continue to read the story on their own. In FY25 this program reached 280 third grade students. This program fills the gap Queen Anne's County is experiencing with the reduction in Reading Resource Teachers in the public schools. These programs are possible because of the funding we receive from the State.

Queen Anne's County Library supports the passage of SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding. I respectfully ask for your support of this bill, which will allow our county public libraries and our regional resource centers to continue to support Maryland public libraries and our 3.3 million library card holders. By providing per capita funding in this budget cycle and increases through 2032, our public libraries will continue to offer access to information, materials, services, and resources our communities need and want.

Thank you for your consideration,

Janet Salazar
Director

SB_378_Feb_9_2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Ranck

Position: FAV

WORCESTER COUNTY
LIBRARY

BILL: SB 378 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries Funding

DATE: February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries Funding

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation

SUBMITTED BY: Jennifer Ranck, Director
Worcester County Library

POSITION: Support

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

I write in strong support of SB 378 which extends the per capita increases for the county libraries and regional resource centers through FY32.

This continued funding will support small and rural libraries through State Aid and the Regional Resource Centers. Oftentimes, these libraries are the first to experience economic downturns while helping the communities most in need of library service. As living expenses continue to rise, libraries provide free access to books and materials, programs for all ages, the internet, and other technology, including laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots. We help people find employment and provide space for Marylanders to easily access services such as tax assistance, veteran benefits, and health insurance information.

Worcester County Library is fortunate to be a member of the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL). ESRL provides the eight county library systems on Maryland's Eastern Shore with daily delivery of library materials, IT support, essential training, and high-quality resource sharing. We depend heavily on the services they provide.

Libraries are foundational to education, economic opportunity, and lifelong learning.

I respectfully request that you support the passage of this budget item.

Sincerely,

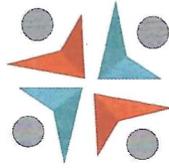


Jennifer Ranck
Director, Worcester County Library

SB378_Support_WashingtonCountyFreeLibrary.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenny Bakos

Position: FAV



WASHINGTON COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY

Where People & Possibilities Meet

February 11, 2026

Senator Guy J. Guzzone, Chairman
Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building

Dear Senator Guzzone and Committee,

I write in strong support of **SB378 – Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding.**

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. SB378 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, WiFi 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 SB378 and continued investment in Maryland's public libraries and regional resource centers.

Sincerely,

Jenny L. Bakos
Executive Director
Washington County Free Library
jbakos@washcolibrary.org

SB378 - Letter of Support_CaroCoPubLib.pdf

Uploaded by: Jonah Owens

Position: FAV



provides eight counties on the Eastern Shore with Cataloging, IT, Programming, and Staff Development support, in addition to providing direct digital resources and database access to residents of all eight counties.

The Caroline County Public Library supports SB378, and I hope that you will as well.

Sincerely,

Jonah Owens

Executive Director
Caroline County Public Library

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

336

Central Library
100 Market Street
Denton, Maryland 21629
p 410.479.1343

Federalsburg Branch
123 Morris Avenue
Federalsburg, Maryland 21632
p 410.754.8397

North County Branch
101 Cedar Lane • P.O. Box
Greensboro, Maryland 21639
p 410.482.2173

SB0378-BT_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 378

Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 11, 2026

From: Sarah Sample and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 378. This bill would update the minimum required state and local funding for libraries and would better align the State's financial support to recognize the expanded role libraries play.

Libraries and regional resource centers increasingly serve growing purposes for Maryland's communities. Maryland's families seek these unique public institutions for educational and childcare support, access to technological resources and high-quality internet, labor and employment aid, and cultural enrichment. In essence, libraries and regional resource centers are a critical nexus of resources, community engagement, and enrichment unique to other community infrastructure – and the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the need for maintaining and deepening the role they play in Maryland's communities. In short, our libraries and regional resource centers serve many more purposes for their communities than their original charge.

With an expanded purpose, however, comes greater need, which counties deeply understand. Local governments have long histories of exceeding mandated funding requirements and equipping public libraries with financial and operational support more than these requirements. They proudly do so because they know the success of local governments hinges on that of the families and communities they serve. Unfortunately, state support has lagged behind that provided by local governments, despite the growing need. SB 378 offers an opportunity for the State to, once again, increase its financial support of these critical facilities to maintain levels of support that recognize the financial needs of libraries today.

Counties welcome increased partnership and support from the State, especially at a time when libraries and regional resource centers are serving new and evolving roles in their communities that necessitate deeper investment. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 378 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

SB378 Regional Resource Centers and County Funding

Uploaded by: Lloyd Jansen

Position: FAV

I respectfully ask that you adequately fund our regional and county public libraries by supporting SB378. Thank you for considering.

The Charles County Public Library supports the passage of SB378.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KWT', written in a cursive style.

KennethWayne Thompson
Executive Director, Charles County Public Library

SB0378 - Regional Resource Center and County Libra

Uploaded by: Lori Milach

Position: FAV



Date: February 9, 2026

Bill: SB 378
Committee: Senate Budget & Taxation Subcommittee
Subject: Education – Regional Resources and County Libraries – Funding
Position: Support

Submitted by: Lori Milach, Eastern Shore Regional Library CEO

Dear Chair Senator Guzzone, Vice Chair Senator Rosapepe and members of the committee,

I am writing in support of SB0378 – Regional Resource Center and County Libraries – Funding, which is intended to extend per capita increases for the county libraries and regional resource centers through FY32. These funding increases will help sustain the important work that libraries perform in your local communities.

The Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL) is a critical component of Maryland’s public library infrastructure, providing essential shared services to the eight county libraries on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. These services include materials delivery, technology infrastructure, shared databases, staff training, and cooperative resource sharing. As a Regional Resource Center, ESRL primarily relies on state funding, making continued state support indispensable.

On the Eastern Shore, libraries frequently serve as the primary access point for internet connectivity, workforce development resources, educational programming, and community support services. Over the past decade, public library programs and attendance have increased significantly, and demand for free public Wi-Fi and online resources have grown exponentially.

Sustained and predictable state funding is essential to ensure that Regional Resource Centers can continue to support local libraries and maintain equitable access to services for all Maryland residents, regardless of geography.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Maryland’s public libraries.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Milach, DPA
Chief Executive Officer
Eastern Shore Regional Library

Harford Letter of support SB 378.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Hastler

Position: FAV



BILL: SB 378 Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries Funding **DATE:** February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries Funding **COMMITTEE:** SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION

TESTIMONY FROM: Mary Hastler, CEO
HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY **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 work that libraries perform in your local communities. Maryland libraries provide robust access to a wide range of services to support lifelong learning, from developing a love of reading and early literacy skills for infants and pre-school children – hosting nearly 30,000 programs for ages birth through five, with total attendance of 900,000 – to providing a wide range of adult programs including workforce training, tax assistance, legal aid, and technology assistance.

Support for the regional resource centers are vital to providing these services in small and rural counties, including eBooks, premium databases, and audio and video content and providing opportunities for our children, families and communities.

Over the past decade, the increasing costs of providing library services (42%) has outpaced inflation (31.8%), Extending the increases of the state share allows us to continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands and levels the playing field for some of our most vulnerable communities. We respectfully ask that you fund public libraries and regional libraries at a level that will ensure sustaining equity and access throughout Maryland to our families and communities.

On behalf of the Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees, Library Staff and our community, we strongly support **SB 378 – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries Funding**.

SB 378 Education – Regional Resource Centers and C

Uploaded by: Megan Sutherland

Position: FAV



Senate Budget and Taxation
SB 378 Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding
February 11, 2026
SUPPORT

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members:

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) strongly supports **SB378 Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding**. The state funding provided in this budget is critical to the success of Maryland's public libraries and the communities they serve. The bill will extend modest per capita increases for Regional Resource Centers and Public Libraries through FY2032. Without this extension, libraries may be forced to make substantial cuts, including reducing programs, services, collections, and operating hours. At a time when we are seeing attempts to disinvest in libraries at the federal level, it is crucial that Maryland continue its strong support for public libraries.

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. PGCMLS receives approximately 25% of its operating funds from the state. Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services (operating expenditures) for county library systems has outpaced inflation (31.8%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm), increasing 42% (\$261,190,270 in FY 2014 and \$370,982,846 in FY 2024) in county library systems, and has increased 37% (\$6,662,332 in FY 2014 and \$9,134,334 in FY 2024) in the regional resource centers. SB378 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032 at an annual rate of increase of 3% for regionals and 3.21% for county library systems. Extending the state share cycle ensures libraries can continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands, including growing needs for internet access and ebooks.

Level funding after Fiscal Year 2027 would substantially and negatively impact public libraries across the state, including those in Prince George's County. More than 3.3 million Marylanders hold public library cards, including 643,523 PGCMLS cardholders. These Marylanders borrow over 53 million items from public libraries yearly, of which over 3.5 million were borrowed in Prince George's County last fiscal year. PGCMLS depends on the state aid administered through MSLA to supplement our local funding. State aid is critical to maintaining our operations across our nineteen branches. **PGCMLS supports the passage of SB378 - Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding as proposed.**

Sincerely,

Mark Winston, Ph. D. CEO

SB378 SMCL Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Blackwell

Position: FAV



February 9, 2026

Bill: Senate Bill 378 Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding

Committee: [Budget and Taxation](#)

From: Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary's County Library

Position: Support

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Trustees, 74 employees, and thousands of card holders (including school student cards) of St. Mary's County Library, I urge you to support funding for county libraries. Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of operating funds from the state. Regionals receive approximately 22% of operating funds from the state. In St. Mary's we receive 17% of our budget from the state; we rely on that funding to provide essential services.

The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27, after which these systems will receive flat funding. SB378 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032 at an annual rate of increase of 3% for regionals and 3.21% for county library systems. Extending the state share cycle ensures libraries can continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands. Without this extension, libraries may be forced to make difficult decisions that reduce the number of programs, services, operating hours, etc. At a time when we are seeing attempted disinvestment in libraries at the federal level, it is a critical time for the state to maintain its support.

Library services have significantly evolved over the last decade, and funding is necessary for libraries to keep pace with increasing demand. Between 2014 and 2024 (the last year for which data is available), the number of public programs has risen by 32% (64,185 in 2014 to 84,576 in 2024). Program attendance has risen by 21%, from 1,788,330 to 2,171,049; enough to fill M & T stadium 30 times over, or Camden Yards 47 times over. In St. Mary's, hosted 1,749 programs in FY 25, with an attendance of 35,535. This funding is vital for us to continue to serve so many.

Maryland public libraries now offer nearly 4 million e-books, an increase of 1480% since 2014. The cost of e-books is not expected to level off anytime soon, and the cost to provide sufficient material to meet demand will outpace both inflation and state funding levels. In St. Mary's, our ebook circulation in FY25 continues to grow, up 12% over last year, even as E-book demand continues to rise, as does the cost of e-materials, far outpacing scheduled funding increases,

As living costs continue to rise, Maryland libraries continue to provide robust access to books, the internet and other technology, buildings, programs, and services for every member of the community. Maryland's libraries support babies and pre-school children and their families/caregivers in developing a love of reading and early literacy skills which set them up for school success. Maryland libraries hosted 29,742 programs for ages birth to

Administrative Offices
23630 Hayden Farm Lane
Leonardtown, MD 20650
301-475-2151
FAX: 301-884-4415
info@stmalib.org

Charlotte Hall Library
37600 New Market Road
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
301-884-2211
FAX: 301-884-2113
hall.manager@stmalib.org

Leonardtown Library
23630 Hayden Farm Lane
Leonardtown, MD 20650
301-475-2846
FAX: 301-884-4415
stma.manager@stmalib.org

Lexington Park Library
21677 FDR Blvd
Lexington Park, MD 20653
301-863-8188
FAX: 301-863-2550
lexi.manager@stmalib.org

www.stmalib.org



five, with a total attendance of 886,277. Maryland libraries support pre-school and school age children with age and reading-level appropriate material in physical and digital formats. Across Maryland's libraries, children checked out nearly 18 million items in FY 2024. IN FY 2025, children (or their parents for them) checked out 432,358 items, helping to build life-long learning skills to ensure Maryland's future.

Maryland's public libraries are supplementing the eroding social safety net, expanding services to include Social Workers in the Library, free legal aid, criminal record expungement, tax assistance, food pantries and more. Marylanders can access more services more easily by using expanded outreach services, including more mobile libraries in neighborhoods providing local WiFi, STEM learning experiences, Makerspace learning, and easier access to collections. In St. Mary's our meeting and study spaces were used 7,692 times, providing an essential "third space" free to all.

Continued funding to support small and rural libraries through State Aid and the Regional Resource Centers is critical to supporting Marylanders. Regional libraries service small and rural libraries where local governments cannot fully fund the cost of operating them. Regionals work cooperatively to books, materials transit services, technology, databases, training and other services to member libraries. IN the Southern Region, our employees and patrons benefit greatly, with the Regional Library providing our catalog, materials processing, transportation of materials between branches, and so much more.

In a time of economic challenges, more than ever Marylanders rely on public libraries, and the regional libraries that support the public libraries, for materials to help inform and inspire, for connectivity online and to their fellow residents, and for innovative programming that addresses a broad range of needs. Supporting a small increase in funding for the five years after FY2027 wilk help ensure that Marylanders will grow, engage in self-development, and thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Blackwell".

Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary's County Library

Administrative Offices
23630 Hayden Farm Lane
Leonardtwn, MD 20650
301-475-2151
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21677 FDR Blvd
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301-863-8188
FAX: 301-863-2550
lexi.manager@stmalib.org

Support Letter SB378 Libraries Funding M Farmer.pd

Uploaded by: Mychelle Farmer

Position: FAV

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone

Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

3 West Miller Senate Office Building

11 Bladen Street

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB378- Education- Regional Resource Centers & County Libraries-Funding: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Guzzone:

I am writing in support of SB378, to strengthen funding for Maryland's three regional resource library centers, and for the state's county libraries. Since state support expires in FY27, SB378 extends funding beginning in FY28, continuing through FY32. The annual per capita increase of 3% for regional libraries and 3.21% for county libraries ensures libraries can continue to meet public service demands. This ensures quality library staff, who are available during existing library operating hours. Special programs and training opportunities are available to all Marylanders, because our local libraries have the capacity to provide such services. Well-trained staff are needed to organize and implement these programs.

As a Maryland resident and in my capacity as vice chair of the Maryland State Library Board, I have had the pleasure of visiting several libraries throughout Maryland. I can attest that libraries are a gathering place for families and community. These libraries provide more than books. They offer internet access, and the usage of this free service has increased 657% since 2014. Statewide, over 20,000 programs are offered for children under five years of age, and this strengthens early literacy skills.

I ask for your support and for the support of the committee to sustain quality services throughout Maryland's county libraries and the regional library system.

Sincerely,



Mychelle Farmer, MD

Vice Chair, Maryland State Library Board

Senate Bill 378 Education Regional Resource Center

Uploaded by: Natalie Hagan

Position: FAV



BILL: **Senate Bill 378**

DATE: February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

TESTIMONY

POSITION: **Support**

FROM: Natalie Hagan,
Executive Director, Kent
County Public Library

Dear Chair Chair Guzzone and Vice Chair Rosapepe:

Kent County Public Library (KCPL) supports funding for the **Senate Bill 378 Education - Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries.**

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of operating funds from the state. Regionals receive approximately 22% of operating funds from the state.

The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27, after which these systems will receive flat funding. Extending the state share cycle ensures libraries can continue to meet increased operating costs and public service demands. Without this extension, libraries may be forced to make difficult decisions that reduce the number of programs, services, operating hours, etc. At a time when we are seeing attempted disinvestment in libraries at the federal level, it is a critical time for the state to maintain its support.

More than 3.3 Marylanders hold public library cards. These Marylanders borrow more than 53 million items from public libraries every year.

Library services have significantly evolved over the last decade, and funding is necessary for libraries to keep pace with increasing demand. Between 2014 and 2024 (the last year for which data is available):

■ Public Programs:

- The number of public programs has risen by 32% (64,185 in 2014 to 84,576 in 2024)
- Program attendance has risen by 21%, from 1,788,330 to 2,171,049; enough to fill M & T stadium 30 times over, or Camden



Yards 47 times over.

■ WiFi:

- In 2024, Marylanders accessed free public WiFi nearly 24 million times at public libraries, an increase of 657%, or more than 20 million more uses than in 2014.

■ E-Books:

- Maryland public libraries now offer nearly 4 million e-books, an increase of 1480% since 2014.
- The cost of e-books is not expected to level off anytime soon, and the cost to provide sufficient material to meet demand will outpace both inflation and state funding levels.

As a rural library system in Maryland, Kent County is particularly in need of continued funding to support small and rural libraries through State Aid and the Regional Resource Centers is critical to supporting Marylanders. Our regional libraries service small and rural libraries where local governments cannot fully fund the cost of operating them. Regionals work cooperatively to provide books, materials transit services, technology, databases, training and other services to member libraries.

Without them, we cannot continue to do what we do.

KCPL supports the passage of this budget item.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Natalie Hagan'.

Natalie Hagan

Executive Director, Kent County Public Library (KCPL)

SB 378 Education - Regional Resource Centers and C

Uploaded by: Peter Hobby

Position: FAV

Peter Hobby
369 Hemsley Dr
Queenstown, MD 21658

BILL: SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding **DATE:** Feb. 11, 2026
SUBJECT: Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - funding **COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation

TESTIMONY FROM: Peter Hobby, Board of Trustees, Queen Anne's County Library
POSITION: Support

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee:

The Queen Anne's County Library Board of Trustees supports **SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding**

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of operating funds from the state.

The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27, after which the Queen Anne's County Library (QACL) and our regional resource center, the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL), will receive flat funding. SB387 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032 with an annual increase of 3% for ESRL and 3.21% for QACL. Without this extension, QACL and ESRL will be forced to make complex decisions that reduce the number of programs, services, operating hours, and staff available to help our community. It is critical for the state to maintain its support for our libraries.

Library services have significantly evolved over the last decade, and funding is necessary for QACL to keep pace with increasing demand. Between FY22 and FY25, the number of public programs offered by QACL increased by 89%, from 407 programs offered to 889. Program attendance also increased from 11,140 in FY 22 to 15,507 in FY 25. Public Wi-Fi use, a valuable service our community needs and uses, increased 43% from FY 23 – FY25. Our community's use of digital formats has steadily increased as well; 35% from FY 24 to FY25.

Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services, our operating expenditures, has outpaced inflation – increasing by 42% for county library systems and 37% for regionals, compared to the 31% overall inflation rate. The largest factor across both conditions was the increased costs of salaries and wages. The demand for digital formats continues to rise, as does the cost of e-materials, outpacing the scheduled funding increases.

QACL supplements the eroding social safety network. Our spaces are open to everyone and allow our community members a place to be when they have nowhere to go. QACL regularly provides access to health services and social services at our library branches through our partnerships with the QAC Health Department to regularly do health screenings and with the QAC Department of Social Services to allow some of their staff to offer services at our branches. We also partner with Eastern Shore Pro Bono to offer legal help to our community members who need it but may not be able to afford it. These types of partnerships are made possible through funding for our library system.

As living costs continue to rise, QACL continues to provide robust access to books, the internet, and other technology, buildings, programs, and services for every member of our community. Our library has thirty

hotspots and ten Chromebooks available to check out for those in our community who don't have access to the internet or need a computer to work on from home. With access to a working computer and the internet, our community members can access job resources, write and send their resumes, apply for jobs, and attend educational opportunities they would not otherwise be able to. When adults can access essential 21st century tools, they are competitive in the job market and can start to break the cycles of poverty.

Continued funding to support small and rural libraries through State Aid and the Regional Resource Centers is critical to support our community. QACL can provide access to homework help and tutoring through Brainfuse, which we are able to offer to our community through competitive pricing negotiated by the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL). Funding for ESRL allows our smaller Eastern Shore public libraries to access databases and other resources at a lower cost than if each of our systems contracted separately with each vendor. We can support individuals looking for jobs or learning new skills through our Gale Courses and Test and Career Prep. Without access to these databases for free, many in our community would not have access to better jobs or be able to learn new skills to get better jobs.

QACL provides early childhood learning and family engagement to our community. In FY 25, QACL was able to present 254 birth-to-five early childhood learning programs focusing on early literacy training, socialization, physical education, and learning about the world around us. These programs were attended by 3,562 children aged birth to 5 and 2,993 adults. In addition, the Library was able to provide 121 programs targeting children 6-10 years old that focused on reading engagement, science, art, learning the art of strategy, and technology, to better prepare our children for the world that awaits them in the future. These programs reached 1,231 students and 765 adults. We were also able to support children who are struggling to read by providing the Book Buddies program in our elementary school. The Book Buddies program trains volunteers to read a portion of a book to students during their lunch period once a week for four weeks. At the end of the program, each student chose a book to keep and take home with them to continue to read the story on their own. In FY25 this program reached 280 third grade students. This program fills the gap Queen Anne's County is experiencing with the reduction in Reading Resource Teachers in the public schools. These programs are possible because of the funding we receive from the State.

In my role on the Queen Anne's County Library Board of Trustees, I support the passage of SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding. I respectfully ask for your support of this bill, which will allow our county public libraries and our regional resource centers to continue to support Maryland public libraries and our 3.3 million library card holders. By providing per capita funding in this budget cycle and increases through 2032, our public libraries will continue to offer access to information, materials, services, and resources our communities need and want.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Hobby
QACL Board of Trustees
phobby@gmail.com
301-704-3435

CCPL_Testimony_SB0378_2.9.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Wright

Position: FAV

BILL:	SB0378	DATE:	February 9, 2026
SUBJECT:	Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries-Funding	COMMITTEE:	Senate, Budget & Taxation Subcommittee
TESTIMONY FROM:	Rachel Wright, Executive Director, Cecil County Public Library	POSITION:	Support

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) fully supports funding for the **SB378- Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries-Funding** which extends per capita increases for county libraries and regional resource centers through FY32.

State funding is critical to the success of Maryland public libraries and the communities they serve. With the current funding cycle set to expire at the end of FY27, failure to support the proposed per capita funding will negatively impact the crucial work libraries do to advance and uplift the millions of Marylanders who rely on them.

Public libraries are community hubs. They lead the way in providing programs, spaces, and initiatives that support the diverse needs of all Marylanders. Just last year, Maryland libraries reported 17 million visits – with each visit representing an individual who turned to their library for something they needed. When libraries support individuals and provide access to the resources, information, or technology they need to start a new business, get a better-paying job, or learn a new skill, libraries are raising up and advancing the entire community.

Public libraries prioritize access and inclusivity. They not only open their doors to welcome the community to brick and mortar locations across the state, but they also intentionally seek out those who lack transportation, who are underserved, or who are geographically isolated by taking mobile libraries and services directly to them. Whether visiting neighborhoods, shelters, community centers, or community events, libraries ensure all Marylanders, not just some Marylanders, have access to critical materials, resources, and information no matter where they are or what their circumstance may be.

As the cost of living continues to rise, Marylanders depend even more heavily on all that public libraries have to offer. State funding is critical to ensuring not only the success of Maryland libraries, but also the success of every Marylander who visits their library for resources, support, access, and information.

On behalf of our community and of all those throughout the state, Cecil County Public Library supports SB 378 – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries-Funding.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Maryland libraries and communities.

Truly,



Rachel Wright
Executive Director, Cecil County Public Library
485 Mauldin Avenue
North East, MD 21901

SB378 Regional Resource Centers and County Funding

Uploaded by: Seth Hershberger

Position: FAV



BILL: SB 378 DATE: February 9, 2026

POSITION: Support

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

I am writing on behalf of the Wicomico Public Library Board of Trustees in support of Senate Bill 378, which extends the state per capita funding cycle for Maryland's county public library systems and regional resource centers.

At Wicomico Public Library, state per capita funding is essential to maintaining quality library services for our community. Like many rural and small counties across Maryland, Wicomico relies on state aid to supplement local funding and ensure residents have equitable access to books, technology, programs, and safe, welcoming library spaces. State investment helps level the playing field so that library service quality is not determined solely by a county's tax base.

The current state funding cycle expires at the end of FY 2027, after which libraries would receive flat funding. SB 378 extends modest, predictable increases through FY 2032, allowing libraries to keep pace with rising operating costs and growing public demand.

Demand for library services continues to grow, especially in rural communities. Libraries provide free internet access, digital materials, early literacy support, and expanded outreach, while increasingly serving as access points for social services and community assistance. Regional resource centers play a critical role by supporting small and rural libraries with shared services such as materials delivery, technology, and training that individual systems could not sustain on their own.

State per capita funding ensures that Marylanders in counties like Wicomico receive reliable, high-quality library services comparable to those available elsewhere in the state. SB 378 provides stability and equity at a time when continued public investment in libraries is more important than ever.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 378.

Sincerely,

Seth Hershberger
Director, Wicomico Public Library

SB278 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Sharon Sinsky-Hopkins

Position: FAV

Sharon Beth Sinsky-Hopkins
822 Thompson Creek Road
Stevensville, MD 21666

Date: February 9, 2026

Testimony for BILL: SB 378 Education-Regional Resource – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding

POSITION: Favorable

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee:

I support SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries – Funding. I live in Queen Anne’s County and very much appreciate the services of the Queen Anne’s County Library (QACL). I am on the board of QACL and also on the board of Citizens for Maryland Libraries.

Maryland public libraries rely on the state for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18% of operating funds from the state. The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27, after which the Queen Anne’s County Library (QACL) and our regional resource center, the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL) will receive flat funding.

SB387 extends the state share increases from FY2028-FY2032 at an annual rate of increase of 3% for ESRL and 3.21% for QACL. Without this extension, QACL and ESRL will be forced to make complex decisions that reduce the number of programs, services, operating hours, and staff available to help our community. It is critical for the state to maintain its support for our libraries.

Library services have significantly evolved over the last decade, and funding is necessary for QACL to keep pace with increasing demand. Between FY22 – FY25, the number of public programs offered by QACL increased by 89%, from 407 programs offered to 889. Program attendance also increased from 11,140 in FY 22 to 15,507 in FY 25.

Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services, our operating expenditures, has outpaced inflation– increasing by 42% for county library systems and 37% for regionals, compared to the 31% overall inflation rate.

As living costs continue to rise, QACL continues to provide robust access to books, the internet and other technology, buildings, programs, and services for every member of our community. Our library has thirty hotspots and ten Chromebooks available to check out for those in our community who don’t have access to the internet or need a computer to work on from home. With access to a working computer and the internet, our community members can access job resources, write and send their resumes, apply for jobs and pursue educational opportunities they would not otherwise be able to. When adults can access essential 21 st century tools, they are competitive in the job market and can start to break the cycles of poverty.

Sharon Beth Sinsky-Hopkins
822 Thompson Creek Road
Stevensville, MD 21666

In addition to promoting education, libraries are among the few public spaces for community members to meet, especially in our rural communities. Libraries in Queen Anne's County serve as warming stations for people who have nowhere else to go during the day.

Continued funding to support small and rural libraries through State Aid and the Regional Resource Centers is critical to support our community. Funding for our regional resource center, ESRL, allows our smaller Eastern Shore public libraries to access databases and other resources at a lower cost than if each of our systems contracted separately with each vendor. We can support individuals looking for jobs or learning new skills through our Gale Courses and Test and Career Prep.

QACL provides early childhood learning and family engagement to our community. In FY 25, QACL was able to present 254 birth-to-five early childhood learning programs focusing on early literacy training, socialization, physical education and learning about the world around us. These programs were attended by 3,562 children aged birth – 5 and 2,993 adults.

In addition, the Library was able to provide 121 programs targeting children 6- 10 years old that focused on reading engagement, science, art, learning the art of strategy, and technology, to better prepare our children for the world that awaits them in the future. These programs reached 1,231 students and 765 adults.

I support the passage of SB 378 Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries - Funding. I respectfully ask for your support of this bill, which will allow our county public libraries and our regional resource centers to continue to support Maryland public libraries and our 3.3 million library card holders.

By providing per capita funding in this budget cycle and increases through 2032, our public libraries will continue to offer access to information, materials, services, and resources our communities need and want.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sharon Sinsky-Hopkins

Citizen

Supporting SB378, Regional and County Library per

Uploaded by: Skip Auld

Position: FAV



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY



BILL:	SB378	DATE:	February 9, 2026
SUBJECT:	Regional and County Library per capita funding	COMMITTEE:	Budget and Taxation Subcommittee
TESTIMONY FROM:	Skip Auld, Chief Executive Officer, Anne Arundel County Public Library	POSITION:	Support

Chair Guzzone and members of the Budget & Taxation Subcommittee:

On behalf of Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL), I write in strong support of SB378, which extends the State’s per capita funding formula for Maryland’s public libraries from FY2028 through FY2032.

State funding is a critical component of AACPL’s operating budget, supporting library staff, facilities, technology, and public services that our residents rely on every day. Current scheduled increases end in FY27; without this extension, libraries—including AACPL—would face flat funding despite rising costs and growing demand. SB378’s modest annual increases of approximately 3 percent provide the predictability needed for responsible planning and continued high-quality service.

Demand for library services in Anne Arundel County continues to grow. Over the past decade, public program offerings and participation have increased substantially, and millions of Marylanders—including many of our residents—depend on library WiFi for school, work, and access to government services. Use of e-books and other digital materials has surged, even as costs for these resources rise faster than inflation.

At the same time, the cost of delivering library services has outpaced inflation, driven largely by increased personnel and technology expenses, while staffing levels have remained relatively flat. Without continued state support, AACPL would be forced to consider reductions in hours, programs, or services that our community values.

Anne Arundel County
Public Library
5 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis MD 21401
410-222-7371
aacpl.net

AACPL plays a vital role in Anne Arundel County by:

- Supporting early literacy and school readiness for young children and their caregivers;
- Providing millions of books and digital materials annually to children and students;
- Expanding access to essential services such as social work support, legal aid, tax assistance, and food resources; and
- Reaching underserved neighborhoods through mobile and outreach services.

Finally, continued State Aid and regional support are essential to ensuring equitable access to library services across Maryland, including smaller and rural communities within Anne Arundel County.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB378. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Skip Auld". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Skip Auld
Chief Executive Officer

SB 378 Testimony - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Vose

Position: FAV



Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice-Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 9, 2026

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

The Ruth Enlow Library would like to add its voice in support of **SB 378**, which provides critical operating funding for libraries statewide, including ours.

As expenses go up, so do the operational costs that public libraries incur delivering services to the communities they serve do as well. SB 378 recognizes the reality of this situation and alters the funding formula to ensure adequate support to these essential centers statewide for years to come.

Libraries, as hubs, bring communities together in a way that is more essential than ever – bringing people and agencies together in the real world, fostering the reading skills that make all education possible, connecting people to trusted information and new ideas, and fundamentally helping those who need it most.

In times of financial trouble, libraries only become more critical to their patrons. Funding devoted to them is a force multiplier that delivers in the end far more than it costs.

The Ruth Enlow Library supports SB 378, and hopes you will as well.

Sincerely,

Thomas Vose
Director, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

SB0378_per capita Howard.pdf

Uploaded by: Tonya Aikens

Position: FAV



Testimony in support of SB0378: Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries-Funding
Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Subcommittee
February 9, 2026
Submitted by Tonya Aikens, Howard County Library System President & CEO

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express support for **SB0378: Education-Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries-Funding**, which would ensure modest, periodic increases to per capita funding for each Maryland public library and regional library system through FY2032.

Maryland public libraries rely on the State for annual operating funding to support library staff, infrastructure, services, and programs. County library systems, on average, receive 18 percent of operating funds from the State, and regionals receive approximately 22 percent. In Howard County, we receive four percent, or \$1.3 million, of our operating funds from the State.

State funds are administered by the Maryland State Library Agency to all 24 Maryland public library systems and three regional systems. The current funding cycle is set to expire at the end of FY27, after which these systems will receive flat funding.

SB0378 extends the state share increases from FY28 to FY32 at an annual rate of increase of 3 percent for regionals and 3.21 percent for county library systems. Extending the State per capita increases provides the stability libraries need to effectively manage rising operating expenses and respond to increasing community demand for services. Without this extension, libraries may be forced to make difficult decisions about staffing, collections, and services.

Library services continue to evolve, and funding is essential for libraries to keep pace with increasing demand for its collections and services of all types for all people. Between 2014 and 2024 (the last year for which data is available):

- Public classes and programs:
 - The number of public programs and classes at Maryland public libraries increased by 32 percent (84,576 in 2024).
 - Attendance rose by 21 percent, from 1,788,330 to 2,171,049 – enough to fill M & T stadium 30 times over or Camden Yards 47 times over.
- WiFi:
 - In 2024, Marylanders accessed free public WiFi nearly 24 million times at public libraries, an increase of 657 percent.
- E-Books:
 - Maryland public libraries now offer nearly 4 million e-books, an increase of 1480 percent since 2014.

- The cost of e-books continues to increase, and the cost to provide sufficient materials to meet demand will outpace both inflation and state funding levels.

Over the past decade, the cost of providing library services has outpaced inflation*, increasing 42 percent in county library systems and 37 percent in the regional resource centers. While the total number of library staff has only increased slightly (2.9 percent), the largest factor (57 percent) was the increased costs of salaries and wages (\$68 million). For those Maryland public libraries who rely on State funds to help cover salaries, this per capita increase is critical.

As living costs continue to rise, Maryland libraries continue to provide robust access to books and materials, the internet and other technology, buildings, programs, and services for every member of the community. Maryland public libraries' everyday work aligns with the Moore-Miller Administration's priorities focusing on several major areas, including:

- **Education:** Libraries provide classes, resources, and services for children and their caregivers, from birth through grade 12. *For our state's youngest learners, libraries are uniquely situated and qualified to help prepare children for kindergarten. Before children attend school, they attend classes at libraries.*
 - *For infants, toddlers, and preschoolers*, regularly occurring classes help children learn social-emotional skills and language skills. Children learn by singing, talking, reading, writing, and playing.
 - *For slightly older preschoolers*, children learn to be creative, get along with others, listen, and the foundations of reading, as well as the basics of letters, numbers, and vocabulary. Children explore science, technology, engineering, math, and art, supporting the development of physical motor skills.
 - *For K to 5 students*, library experiences enhance their school lessons—including math and science—through the use of children's literature and creative expression, which support the development of cognitive, social, and communication skills.
 - *For middle and high school students*, libraries provide homework help, research tools, tutoring, and practice tests for AP exams, SAT and ACT tests.
- **Lowering Costs:** Libraries offer a myriad of materials, services and resources to the community.
 - Libraries provide access to free practice tests for higher education and career certifications (e.g., SAT, ASVAB, Realtor, nursing school), free online skill-building courses (e.g., LinkedIn Learning), access to broadband, free or low-cost printing, and more.
 - Additionally, more than 3.3 million Marylanders hold public library cards and borrow more than 53 million items every year. For individuals and families working to stay within their budgets, free programs, family events, and learning opportunities at the library offer real relief. Every dollar saved by borrowing books and other materials from the library becomes a dollar freed to put groceries on the table.
- **Economic Competitiveness:** Libraries are frontline workforce development hubs, offering free access to job search tools, resume and interview support, digital skills training, career coaching, certification prep and small business resources – all in trusted, welcoming spaces that remove barriers. They not only help people find jobs, they also help them build long-term skills and confidence.
 - In Howard County, our Project Literacy's Career Pathways for Skilled Immigrants program provides English classes, pathways to an external high school diploma, workforce development counseling, and job-related workshops.

Continued funding to support small and rural libraries through State aid and the Regional Resource Centers is critical to supporting Marylanders. Regional libraries service small and rural libraries where local governments cannot fully fund the cost of operating them. Regionals work cooperatively to books, materials transit services,

technology, databases, training and other services to member libraries. These libraries are the first to experience economic downturns, and the most in need of library services.

Thank you for your longtime support of Maryland public libraries. We ask that you **favorably recommend SB0378** for passage.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens,
President & CEO

**31.8 percent, according to https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm*