

HB 660 AFSCME Council 3 Testimony_FAV.pdf

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Patrick Moran – President

**HB 660 – Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center - Funding
Budget and Taxation Committee
March 24, 2026**

FAVORABLE

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 supports House Bill 660. House Bill 660 alters the calculation of minimum funding for operating and capital expenses of the State Library Resource Center beginning in FY28. The Enoch Pratt Central Library is the designated State Library Resource Center (SLRC) under state law.¹ The SLRC's mission is to "provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in the state."²

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 represents approximately 55,000 public service workers across varying levels of government including city, county, state, and higher education. AFSCME members are on the frontlines every day delivering critical public services our communities depend on. AFSCME is proud to represent library workers across Maryland through AFSCME Local 6359, which represents public library workers in Anne Arundel County, Frederick County, Howard County, and the Enoch Pratt library system.

The SLRC occupies a critical role in Maryland's public library system. The SLRC is responsible for maintaining a collection of various academic resources for other libraries and their customers, providing trainings to library workers throughout Maryland, and offering other services such as broadband internet access to other public institutions, research database subscriptions to all Maryland public libraries, and presenting other public programming. In short, the SLRC plays an essential role in Maryland's public library system and is dependent upon public funding to provide these key community resources.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 supports enhanced public investment in our public services, institutions, and employees to ensure the delivery of quality public services to all Marylanders. House Bill 660 achieves this objective.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report of HB 660.

¹ MD Code, Education, § 23-201(a).

² MD Code, Education, § 23-201(b).

HB660-B&T-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

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BRANDON M. SCOTT
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HB 0660

March 24, 2026

TO: Members of the Senate Budget and Tax Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of the Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 660 -Public Libraries - State Library Resource Center - Funding
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 660.

HB 660 would provide a slight increase in funding for the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) for FY2028-FY2032. This increase would allow SLRC to continue to help libraries across the state to offer services and resources that the community needs.

Maryland has a unique model in that we do not have an independent state library. While each jurisdiction has its own local library system, the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central branch serves as the SLRC for Maryland. The ability to share materials and resources statewide is a critical component of ensuring that each resident across the state can have equal access to knowledge and information regardless of whether their local library system has that material on file.

Through its role as the SLRC, in 2025 alone, students from kindergarten through the 12th grade used the Enoch Pratt's online databases 1.5 million times, residents contacted library staff for references 267,704 times and people accessed government documents available via the library over 9,000 times.

While there is a mandatory level of funding provided for SLRC services, that funding has not been sufficient over time due to costs outpacing the mandated levels. Last fiscal year, the Enoch Pratt Free Library had to transfer nearly \$1.8 million from its general fund to maintain some of these essential services. The BCA and Enoch Pratt Free Library are proud to continue to provide services to residents of Baltimore City and statewide, however, the BCA has concerns about the long-term fiscal health of the SLRC without adjusting funding levels.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 660.