



THE LEADING ADVOCATE FOR THE MARYLAND LIBRARY COMMUNITY

Ways and Means Committee

HB196 Public Schools and County Boards of Education – Publication of School Library Catalogs

January 27, 2022

Oppose

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Library Association (MLA) and the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (MAPLA) are writing in **opposition to HB 196 Public Schools and County Boards of Education – Publication of School Library Catalogs**. The bill would require public school libraries to provide a list of titles in their catalog to the county Board of Education which would in turn, “compile certain information” to be posted on the Board’s website. Additionally, each public school would be required to annually inform the parents and guardians where “certain information” on the school library’s catalog could be found.

Library catalogs for Maryland public schools are easily accessible through school websites that have school librarians. School library catalogs are available 24/7 for student access and any member of the public may search them for a title or subject. School library catalogs have been available online for many years. This bill is unnecessary for providing public access, indeed, that is a fundamental role of libraries: providing access to information. This does not need to be codified by law.

MLA & MAPLA are also concerned that HB196 would encourage attempts to censor materials in school libraries. It is the role of a library to provide information which presents all points of view; censorship limits a library’s ability to fulfill this role. Efforts at censorship in school libraries have been deemed unconstitutional as the Supreme Court ruled in Board of Education, Island Tree Union Free School District v. Pico in 1982.

We respectfully ask for your opposition to HB 196. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Bowman, President, Maryland Library Association

Ed Goyda, President, Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators