



Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 3, 2021

**RE: Senate Bill 477 - Enoch Pratt Free Library – Operating Hours and Funding
Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

On behalf of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, our Board of Trustees, and the citizens of Baltimore, we respectfully request support for **Senate Bill 477 - Enoch Pratt Library-Operating Hours and Funding**.

As you may be aware, this legislation dates back to January of 2016 when the Pratt Library made the courageous decision to remain open to the public after normal hours in the wake of the Freddie Gray unrest. That moment sparked a renewed recognition for the important role that the Pratt Library System plays as a vital resource for the community. Since that time, funding from this legislation has enabled Enoch Pratt Library branches to expand its hours to include evenings and weekends.

Since library hours were expanded the Pratt has seen:

- 25% increase in collection use
- 43% increase in Wi-Fi usage
- 10% increase in reference materials which supports educational studies
- 65% increase in social media followers

SB 477 Expanded Operating Hours Funding mandates \$3.0 million annually from the State which is matched by \$750,000 from the City of Baltimore. Passage of this legislation is vital to maintaining this level of service. Without this legislation the Pratt will be forced to reduce services and lay off workers at a time when the citizens of Baltimore need the range of services offered by the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Pratt and our commitment to providing expanded hours of operation and services to advance the library's dedication to equity, inclusion, and greater access to enhance the quality of life for Baltimore City residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Daniel", is positioned above a blue horizontal line.

Heidi Daniel (Jan 28, 2021 13:56 EST)

Heidi Daniel
Chief Executive Officer