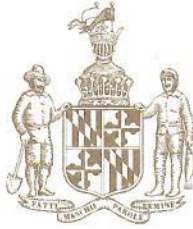


NANCY J. KING  
Legislative District 39  
Montgomery County  
MAJORITY LEADER



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3686 · 410-841-3686  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3686  
Fax 301-858-3670 · 410-841-3670  
Nancy.King@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 432 – Public Libraries – Electronic Book Licenses - Access**

February 11, 2021

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Senate Bill 432 will require a publisher who offers to license an electronic book to the public to also offer reasonable terms that would allow public libraries to provide their patrons access to the electronic book.

The terms stated in the bill language will allow publishers to:

- Limit the number of users a public library may simultaneously allow to access an electronic book
- Limit the number of days a public library may allow a user to access an electronic book
- Require public libraries to use technological protection measures that would prevent a user from maintaining access to an electronic book beyond the access period and would prevent users from allowing other to access an electronic book.

Senate Bill 432 also requires that electronic book licenses be made available to public libraries on the same day that it is made available to the public.

Current and past publisher practices have impeded public library patron's access to electronic books. Large publishers like Amazon and Audible (a subsidiary of and exclusive provider of electronic audiobooks to Amazon), have over 20,000 "exclusive" titles which they will license to individuals, but not to public libraries. And some publishers who do license to public libraries will do so only after the title has been out for three months or more.

This bill does not set pricing on titles, it merely stipulates that terms be reasonable. Currently libraries pay much higher prices for content than consumers. For example, the New York Times bestseller *Ready Player Two* has a list price of \$22.05 and the consumer can keep this electronic book forever. The same book license for a public library costs \$95 and the library has to renew that license after two years.

I am also offering an amendment that will include audiobooks as part of this legislation.

This legislation will protect our public library users, and allow our public libraries to continue their mission of offering free and open access to a broad range of materials and services, and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 432 with amendments.