



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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

**SPONSOR:** Senator King

**HEARING DATE:** March 24, 2021

**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 432**, which allows public libraries, including the Prince George's County Memorial Library System, access to electronic books under reasonable terms while complying with the publishers' licensing terms. The reasonable terms include allowing public libraries to purchase electronic books on the same day as the public and in the quantities needed to meet the demand of our residents. Additionally, the County supports the proposed amendments to expand the scope of the bill to include electronic audiobooks.

Due to the costs and lack of access to broadband and technology, electronic and audio books are inaccessible for many Prince George's County residents, making the public library their only viable option for reading or listening to electronic books. Since last March, when the pandemic first hit, electronic books in both formats have become more important than ever. Due to COVID-related closures during this time, electronic books were often the only books available to our community. For the calendar year 2020, Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) circulated over 390,000 electronic books and over 265,000 electronic audiobooks to residents.

Publishers current restrictions on public libraries, including charging up to triple the market price for licenses and restricting the ability to purchase electronic books and audiobooks the same day as the public, negatively affect PGCMLS' ability to provide residents with electronic books. **SB 432** removes these barriers.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 432 WITH AMENDMENTS offered by the sponsor to include electronic audiobooks** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.