

## LAAC TESTIMONY 04/13/23

My name is Debbie Brown and I live in Rockville, Maryland. I am testifying on behalf of the Montgomery County Public Library Accessibility Advisory Committee, of which I am secretary.

The Library Accessibility Advisory Committee advises the MCPL director and Library board members on increasing the value and accessibility of library services, facilities, online presence and programming for people with disabilities.

The LAAC has concerns about the budget because any cutting of staff that affects all County residents affects people with disabilities even more.

For example, all library users sometimes need staff assistance to find materials or get started in operating library technology. People with disabilities may need more assistance, such as clearer instructions or written instructions because they are deaf or have audio processing problems.

Librarians often need to pick up the slack when other county agencies are lacking in accessibility. For example, people often call, text or email Ask a Librarian when using a county website is too daunting.

In order to keep libraries fully staffed, substitutes are necessary because of illness, and like everyone else, library staff ought to be able to go on vacation knowing their work will be done. We ask you to restore the FTE positions for substitutes.

The Library Pages put returned materials in order and shelve them. The cuts to that part time position affect people with disabilities because that job provides good work experience doing much appreciated work. And having fewer pages affects all library users because of the increased time it takes to get materials on the shelves, especially during the summer. Please restore the FTE positions for pages.

All of the goals in the MCPL strategic plan apply to people with disabilities as well as to other people.

People with disabilities need to begin school ready to learn. People with disabilities whose first language is not English need to be able to participate in cultural programs. The ambitious MCPL strategic plan needs fully staffed libraries to carry it out.

Like everyone else, people with disabilities use the library as a place to do homework, use the internet for job searches, and participate in cultural activities, and we need fully staffed libraries to serve all of the county's citizens.