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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 287
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for consideration of SB287. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program has two components - a competitive grant program for large institutions (\$3 m+ budgets) and another one for mid-size to small institutions..

The St. Mary's County Arts Council serves a small rural community and is challenged by a lack of funding. Leonardtown, our county seat, is designated as an Arts and Entertainment District. We are lacking a performance venue in Leonardtown and the county would greatly benefit from a grant that would enable us to create such a space.

We spend a lot of our time attempting to raise sufficient funds to keep our current level of programs. We've been fortunate to have received donations in the form of real property that we have used to run our programs, especially those in under-served communities of the county. We can't realistically continue to provide our current level of service to the community by hoping to rely on these kinds of donations.

SB287 creates a program that promises equity in distribution of funds, and allows the small but critical arts services we provide to flourish.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB287.

Nell Elder
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