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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB465

Admissions and Amusement Tax – Distribution to Maryland State Arts Council

Thank you for your consideration of SB 645. Originally signed into law as Chapter 145 (April 2016), this legislation removes the sunset provision and continues the distribution of \$1 million to the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) through the Preservation of Cultural Arts (POCA) monies. This \$1 million distribution has helped to bring continued investment towards MSAC over the past 5 years.

These funds, augmenting MSAC's base appropriation, have been critical to our agency's success. With lead funding from MSAC, in FY20 the Arts and Humanities Council (AHCRC) launched our Advancing Equity in the Arts & Humanities initiative, which consists of three strategic programs: comprehensive training for AHCRC's entire board of directors and staff; racial equity training for Montgomery County's cultural nonprofit organizations; and a year of racial equity consulting for AHCRC provided by Race Forward.

MSAC's investment allowed AHCRC to research over 42 grant makers in the arts and humanities sector to inform our work. Our subsequent FY21 grant guideline recommendations incorporate best practices in the sector and prioritize DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access) in grant making. This work, with the intent of deepening the impact of state and county investments in our sector, is in response to historical implicit bias in cultural policymaking that continues to negatively impact Montgomery County's small and culturally ethnic/specific organizations.

Considering Montgomery County's unique position as one of the most diverse counties in America, MSAC's key support for our work in advancing equity in the arts & humanities is critical for our county's and state's continued economic growth, development and quality of life factors for all residents.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB 465.

Suzan Jenkins

CEO, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

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