



MARYLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS

January 30, 2020

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

HOUSE BILL 135- Admissions and Amusement Tax - Electronic Bingo and Tip Jars - Distribution to Maryland State Arts Council- SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Kaiser and Members of the Committee:

I am the Operations Manager at the Maryland Center for the Arts, a 501(c)3 nonprofit arts organization dedicated to providing creative and collaborative experiences in all disciplines of the arts, and building and operating a center to provide the region with enhanced access to quality space to present, exhibit, and participate in the arts. We receive annual program operating support from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) through Creativity Grants as well as through grants from the Harford County Cultural Arts Board which receives funds from MSAC.

I can attest to the great benefit and impact of arts programming in our community in Harford County. I grew up in Harford County training and performing as a ballet/contemporary dancer, actor, and cellist. My dance training started when I was four years old, and I started playing the cello at age nine. I also performed in plays/musicals throughout my student life. My academic and personal achievements were shaped by my well-rounded education in dance, theater, and music, and the experience I gained performing in front of audiences instilled my self-confidence. From age 18-25, I performed professionally in dance and music, while also earning degrees in Dance and Arts Administration from Goucher College. Today I work full-time at the Maryland Center for the Arts, overseeing program/event development, fundraising, and marketing; while also teaching dance and playing my cello at church.

I, among many others, have personally experienced the power of the arts. Not only do the arts inspire and challenge, they also have a unique way of expanding one's intelligence and perspective. As Rep. Alma Adams once said: "The arts are a universal language that help us understand diversity, cultures and our most complex issues... Each generation has its own unique set of challenges, but it is through the arts and humanities that we learn compassion, understanding and critical thinking skills that enable us to address these problems and find solutions."

HB135 is important because it will help MSAC continue to fund arts programs that benefit youth in diverse communities throughout the State of Maryland. Thank you for carefully considering the Admissions and Amusement Tax - Electronic Bingo and Tip Jars - Distribution to Maryland State Arts Council, which will positively impact and benefit the lives of residents and visitors through quality arts programming.

Thank you,

Amanda Pugh
Operations Manager, Maryland Center for the Arts

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