



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 135  
Admissions and Amusement Tax -  
Distribution to Maryland State Arts Council**

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Thank you for your consideration of HB135. 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 and has had a positive impact on the economy and creative industries statewide.

On the local level, the Howard County Arts Council receives a block grant from the State through MSAC. This grant underwrites activities that support re-grants to local arts organizations, artist-in-education residencies in our schools, and outreach programs such as Head StART in ART, which provides visiting artist programs for preschoolers from low income families. It also supports activities at the Howard County Center for the Arts, a 32,000 square foot, multi-purpose arts facility located in Ellicott City, which is operated by the Arts Council. At the Center, we present 10-12 exhibitions, provide low-cost meeting and studio space for artists, and offer year-round classes in the visual arts, music, theater and dance for people of all ages. In FY19, the Arts Council served nearly 40,000 children and adults at the Center.

In addition, many of the local arts organizations we serve – such as Candlelight Concerts, Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts, and Rep Stage - receive direct grants from MSAC to support their missions, programs and audiences. In FY19, these grantees reported serving 280,000 people. The combined total of Howard Countians who benefited from MSAC funding last year was 320,000 – a clear indicator of how important the arts are to the people living and raising their families in Howard County.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB127.

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