



January 23, 2020

240.644.1100 BOX OFFICE  
301.585.1225 EDUCATION CENTER  
240.644.1099 ADMIN OFFICE

[RoundHouseTheatre.org](http://RoundHouseTheatre.org)

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

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 Perseveration of Cultural Arts (POCA) monies. This \$1 million distribution has helped to bring continued investment towards MSAC over the past 5 years.

As a frequent recipient of MSAC funding, Round House Theatre values the support of the state of Maryland as we continue to develop and expand our programs that improve arts accessibility and education to audience members of all ages and backgrounds. MSAC funding is vital to several of Round House's program areas, including educational opportunities for all ages.

Annual grant funds from MSAC have enabled Round House to foster the next generation of theatre audiences by offering free tickets to teenagers and college students ages 13-22 through our Free Play program. With support from MSAC, Round House has been able to increase the number of students served through Free Play from 1,000 to more than 3,500 over the last three seasons. In addition to extending our art outside our walls through our School Residency program, Round House Teaching Artists lead workshops and serve as judges in the annual Montgomery County Public School Theatre Festival for middle and high school students.

Round House productions highlight voices that have been historically misrepresented and under-resourced by the theatre field. More than half of our performances are followed by post-show talkbacks which offer audience members an opportunity to deepen their engagement with our productions. We partner with local academic institutions, nonprofits, and other community groups during these free events to offer cultural perspectives that enhance the content of our productions.

Round House seeks to build one of the nation's leading regional theatres by establishing long-term relationships with exceptional artists, and to integrate comprehensive theatre education for patrons of all ages into every aspect of our work. Funding from MSAC is crucial to supporting the continued growth of these initiatives. For these reasons, we ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 135.

Sincerely,

Ryan Rilette  
Artistic Director  
[RRilette@RoundHouseTheatre.org](mailto:RRilette@RoundHouseTheatre.org)

Ed Zakreski  
Managing Director  
[EZakreski@RoundHouseTheatre.org](mailto:EZakreski@RoundHouseTheatre.org)

BETHESDA  
4545 East-West Highway  
Bethesda, MD 20814-3309

EDUCATION CENTER  
925 Wayne Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4451

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
Silver Spring Civic Building  
One Veteran's Place  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4681