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Environment and Transportation
Committee

Chair

Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Joint Committee on Ending
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Joint Committee on Pensions



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 135; Admissions and Amusement Tax - Distribution to Maryland State Arts Council

Testimony of Delegate Brooke Lierman
Hearing January 30, 2020 at 1:00 PM
Ways and Means Committee

What this bill does

In 2009 legislative session, lawmakers created the Special Fund for the Preservation of Cultural Arts (POCA). POCA is funded by a 5% state admissions and amusement tax collected on electronic bingo and electronic tip jars. POCA was created to offer additional financial support to arts organizations in financial distress. During the 2016 legislative session, the General Assembly began allocating \$1 million of POCA funds to the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). This bill simply continues \$1 million distribution for MSAC by removing the sunset provision.

Why this bill matters

Over 17,000 full-time or full-time equivalent jobs in Maryland owe their creation to the arts, along with \$60 million in local and state revenue. The total economic activity generated by the arts sector in Maryland is measured to be over \$1.3 billion per year. Undoubtedly, the Maryland arts sector is prolific. It is an economic engine that adds to the wealth of reasons to live in the State of Maryland. The arts enrich the lives of every Marylander, in every county.

The \$1 million that the MSAC receives each year allows it to provide grants to organizations around the State - funding arts organizations and artists in every County; bring increased investment for all 24 county arts councils; and ensuring that Arts in Education programs continue to grow. This bill provides critical funds for the Maryland arts sector. The Maryland arts sector is a robust community of arts organizations and independent artists that invest their time, energy and money in all corners of the state.

Why should you vote for this bill

These funds have been key to the success of the Maryland State Arts Council. MSAC provides funding to almost 300 arts organizations, hundreds of independent artists, and over 500 Arts in Education programs in schools across Maryland. Arts organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming spaces. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages, and act as anchors for our communities from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore. Passing this legislation will ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same important access to arts organizations that we enjoy today.

Admissions and Amusement Tax – Distribution to MD State Arts Council *HB 135 (Lierman); SB 465 (Guzzone)*

This bill meets a critical need for the Maryland arts sector:

Over 17,000 full-time or full-time equivalent jobs in Maryland owe their creation to the arts, along with \$60 million in local and state revenue. The total economic activity generated by the arts sector in Maryland is measured to be over \$1.3 billion per year. Undoubtedly, the Maryland arts sector is prolific. It is an economic engine that adds to the wealth of reasons to live in the State of Maryland.

Whether catching a show at the Strathmore, the Olney Theatre, the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, the Academy Art Museum in Talbot County, Joe's Movement Emporium, the Creative Alliance, or the Chesapeake Arts Center – the arts enrich the lives of every Marylander, in every county.

History:

The key to the success of the Maryland arts sector has been ongoing support from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). Through a myriad of grant programs, MSAC provides funding to almost three hundred arts organizations, hundreds of independent artists and over five hundred Arts in Education programs in schools across Maryland.

During the 2009 legislative session, lawmakers created the Special Fund for the Preservation of Cultural Arts (POCA). POCA is funded by a 5% state admissions and amusement tax collected on electronic bingo and electronic tip jars. POCA was created to offer additional financial support to arts organizations in financial distress. During the 2016 legislative session, the General Assembly began allocated \$1 million of POCA monies was directly allocated to MSAC. Since that time, MSAC has equitably invested these funds in arts organizations, arts education initiatives and independent artists across the state – further growing Maryland's robust creative economy.

What this bill does:

HB 135 / SB 287 continues this \$1 million distribution for MSAC by removing the sunset provision found in 2016 legislation.

The admissions and amusement tax will continue to:

- help fund hundreds of arts organizations and artists across Maryland.
- bring increased investment for all 24 county arts councils.
- ensure that Arts in Education programs continue to grow.

HB 135 / SB 287 will not only protect investments in the arts, but also help MSAC continue to grow its offerings for the Maryland arts sector.