

Chair Anne Kaiser and Members of
The House Ways and Means Committee
131 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB565
OPPOSE

Morgan's cinematic arts and sciences major named Screenwriting and Animation (SWAN), is among a half dozen or more public and private undergraduate and graduate film programs in the region. SWAN is the fastest growing interdisciplinary major in our College of Liberal Arts. Among incoming majors are high school students from Maryland arts magnates, and students from regional community college programs with AA degrees awarded in related areas such as digital media arts. The SWAN major provides a liberal arts context and emphasizes craft skills that are value-added for careers in film and TV, and for diverse segments of industry. The major integrates computer science and the liberal arts, and has over 100 majors, while over 60 students from across disciplines take courses in the SWAN Program. English Graduate Studies also converges SWAN into its programs for MA and Ph.D. concentrations in film and visual storytelling. Internships and field experience are foundational features for all of these programs. In the past, Morgan students have been the beneficiary of expanded film and television production in Maryland. Their experiences within the region on HBO and NETFLIX series, and on independent films have helped pave the way to their professional success. For example Alicia Agramonte (2015), is now Director of Development for film at Revelations Entertainment, actor Morgan Freeman's film company in Hollywood. Kimani Kendall (2017) is a writing production assistant, working in series including *Boomerang* and most recently with Michael B. Jordan in Berlin his new as yet unreleased action film. Kyle Yearwood (2014), a multimedia visual artist and editor who has joined us today on the panel to speak for himself. Without regional opportunities, these Morgan students and many others would not have had a way forward in their careers on professional projects and actual production sets, without the great expense of study away that most of our students cannot afford whether in New York or Atlanta, or even Virginia. The elimination of the film tax credit kills POSSIBILITY for cinematic arts and sciences students at Morgan. We need all of the POSSIBILITY that we can get to value the expressive arts and the business frameworks (including film tax credits) that grow creative industry at a low to NO risk for benefits. The film tax credit factors into the development of the academic facility and professional sound stages already owned by Morgan that are the future home of our cinematic arts and sciences major and its many POSSIBILITIES for students.

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