

February 12, 2020

Chair Anne Kaiser and
Members of the Ways and Means Committee
131 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
RE: HB565

Dear Chair Kaiser and Ways and Means Committee Members,

My name is Sherri Bramlett. I am a Journeyman Hair Stylist and Steward for I.A.T.S.E. Local 798, Makeup and Hair Stylists Union. I have worked in the film and television business for over 30 years in the Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C. area. I was born in Washington, D.C. and raised in Southern Maryland. Although I have traveled all over the country and overseas, I have never found another place that I love as much as Maryland. I love it so much that in 1995 I bought a house here in Annapolis, Md. It was the same year I started working on a Baltimore television series, "Homicide: Life On The Street".

From 1995 to 2008, I was working steady and had an abundance of job opportunities in the film and television business. Then, the recession came and the film business left Maryland. The film workers who had relied on the income they received here in Maryland suffered greatly. Many of them, whom I had begun my career with, left Maryland to settle in Louisiana, North Carolina, or Georgia.

Why those states? What did those states have that Maryland didn't?

The answer is they had better tax credit incentive programs.

I did not leave. I could not leave. Maryland was home. I believed that the film business would come back to Maryland. Ten years later, I still believe that film and television could be a thriving business once again in Maryland. We have everything here. We have beaches, mountains, rivers, pastures, cities... you name it, we got it! Scenery is crucial to the film business. Location, location, location is everything.

Also, there are many reasons why it would be good if Maryland would welcome and support the film and television business.

Films and television shows hire a huge amount of employees. Full time and part time employment is offered to the public each and every time a production company sets up their offices. They hire office workers, accountants, production assistants, drivers, costumers, tailors, caterers, carpenters, location managers, hair stylists, makeup artists, lighting designers, grips, electricians, actors and the list goes on and on.

If you've ever sat through the credits at the end of a movie, you know what I'm talking about.

Wouldn't it be great if all those people had jobs?

Wouldn't it be great if those people could keep those jobs for years and years
Wouldn't it be great if all those people with those jobs could live in Maryland, buy houses here, buy cars here, and buy groceries here?

And what does all this buying do for the economy? It fuels the economy by circulating more money into the pockets of Maryland's small businesses, schools, hotels, realtors, grocers, landscapers, etc. You get the idea.

Our economy would be bustling with the inclusion and support of the film and television business in Maryland.

I have to also mention the collateral benefits of the film business in Maryland.

When film and television companies come to Maryland, they have to find housing. Not only do they have to find housing for key technicians, designers, producers and directors, they also have to find housing for all the actors starring in the movie for the run of the show, whether it is two months long to perhaps a nine month shoot, they need housing. That housing is usually hotels and it means that many rooms have to be booked for extended periods of time.

Housing is not the only thing that companies need. Rental cars, rental trucks, and rental vans, set trailers for actors, and set trailers for makeup and hair.

Let's talk about food. All of those people staying in all of the hotels will need to buy groceries or eat in restaurants. These same people will be seeking entertainment for their days off. They will go shopping, watch movies, visit museums, and work out in gyms. All of this means they will spending loads and loads of money in the state of Maryland.

Also, employment opportunities abound on a film or television set. The opportunities are as diverse as the people in Maryland applying for the jobs.

Young people just graduating from high school can apply to be a production assistant, background actor, office worker, or intern for a production department.

College and trade school graduates can get production jobs such as a production designer, researcher, artist, photographer, travel coordinator, or accountant.

In closing I would like to point out that the "Welcome to Maryland" sign as we drive into the state says "We're open for business". If that is indeed true, let's be open to the film and television business.

Let's welcome and support this business that employs thousands of people and spends millions of dollars to Maryland. The film and television business in Maryland will bring many diverse people together to create an amazing collaborative art form. Ultimately, it will communicate to the world what a wonderful and diverse place we have here in the state of Maryland.

Please do not eliminate Maryland's film tax credit program.

Thank you,
Sherri Bramlett
I.A.T.S.E. 798 Steward, 4th District
sherribramlett798@icloud.com
410-271-8477