



Brandon M. Scott
President
Baltimore City Council

100 Holliday Street, Suite 400 · Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-396-4804 · Fax: 410-539-0647
e-mail: councilpresident@baltimorecity.gov

HB 1455

February 28, 2020

TO: The Honorable Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, President of the Baltimore City Council

RE: HOUSE BILL 1455 – Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

POSITION: SUPPORT

I write to you in **support** of House Bill 1455. This bill will help establish makerspaces around the state, preparing residents for the future of work, generating equitable economic development, strengthening our schools, and supporting entrepreneurs of all ages.

I have supported Open Works, a Baltimore City makerspace, since its inception in 2016. They have received capital funding from the Baltimore Development Corporation, and have worked with Baltimore City Public Schools on curriculum for both students and teachers.

Open Works has quickly grown into a national leader in the maker movement, setting new precedents on the ability for makerspaces to deliver economic impact; diversifying a field that has been historically unrepresentative of minorities and women; and delivering high-quality educational programming in fabrication, design, and entrepreneurship to learners of all ages. In a field without widely documented best practices, Open Works has developed a valuable set of operational competencies that can help other municipalities in Maryland derive similar economic and educational benefits from makerspaces. We are incredibly proud to put Baltimore on the map as a leader in creating a 21st century manufacturing economy – a path forward that pays respect to our past while also writing a new narrative about our future.

The proposed legislation creates a non-lapsing fund to be administered by TEDCO that would support the dissemination of Open Works' best practices to other makerspaces and municipalities establishing makerspaces in the State of Maryland. This will help other new organizations increase their ability to deliver high-quality services to communities in need, quickly scale their audience, and produce sustainable, grassroots economic growth. Further, this bill will help ensure the financial viability of public-facing makerspaces in Maryland by providing operational support that can be leveraged for greater growth, productivity, and private fundraising.

As this bill will help with the creation of makerspaces around the state and the sharing of best practices from Baltimore's Open Works, I urge you to move for a **favorable** report on House Bill 1455.