



# Hippodrome Foundation

Raising the curtain on opportunity.

February 21, 2022

Senator Guy Guzzone  
Chairman, Budget and Tax Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone:

I am writing on behalf of the Hippodrome Foundation Board to express our enthusiastic support of **Senate Bill 597** to implement theatrical tax credits in the state of Maryland to incentive the building of Broadway Shows in the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center and in other venues across the state.

In addition to all of the economic and social benefits **Senate Bill 597** would bring about (which are substantial and Maryland is currently losing to other states), there is also educational value in putting the tax credits into place. The Hippodrome Foundation (HFI) is responsible for sharing the assets of the state-owned France-Merrick Performing Arts Center with the Maryland community and this is done by providing free outreach and education programs for thousands of students each year. Free summer theater camp, student matinees, master classes, programs for seniors and more have been offered since 2004 when the facility opened. HFI programs increase arts appreciation, advance academic progress and get students to think creatively, assist teachers to inspire their students, develop/enhance life skills (such as teamwork) and expose Maryland youth to career opportunities in the performing arts.

Incentivizing producers to build Broadway shows in the state of Maryland would create myriad opportunities for HFI to expand current programs and introduce students to professional costuming, set building, props, make up, auditioning and more. The two largest producers of national touring Broadway are headquartered in Maryland, but shows are being built elsewhere! From an educational perspective, this is a lost opportunity, and we are hopeful the committee will approve **Senate Bill 597** so HFI can expose even more Maryland young people to careers in the performing arts.

The foundation is committed to share the France-Merrick Performing Center. Performing arts can and should be used as an important tool for learning - passing **Senate Bill 597** would give Maryland venues one more tool to serve our community.

Respectfully,

Olive Waxter  
Executive Director

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