



March 28, 2022

Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program
Statement of Support
Ways and Means - SB453

The **MD State Representative of Nation of Makers** is committed to expanding maker based learning opportunities in makerspaces for K-12, higher education and workforce development, and strengthening local resiliency by promoting community collaboration across a wide spectrum of partners, contributors and practitioners.

In this capacity, the **MD State Representative** informally consults and collaborates with groups such as University of Maryland Makerspace Initiative in College Park, public and independent school-based makerspaces, public library system makerspaces, out-of-school time community partners and funding agencies. It models the community-building and collaboration practice of Open Works in its endeavors.

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 communities in Maryland derive similar economic and educational benefits from makerspaces.

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.

Constructing a makerspace network would immediately catapult Maryland into a national leadership role in cultivating an innovation economy, and have profound implications on the next 25 years of economic growth, workforce development, STEM educational excellence, disaster preparedness, and startup activity.

For these reasons, the **MD State Representative for Nation of Makers** encourages a favorable report on bill SB453.