



## Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic (TAMA)

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Honorable Members of the House:

We are writing to express our full support for HB1451, the Arts Incubator Workgroup, a crucial initiative to sustain and invest in our creative arts economy. As artists ourselves, we know that the arts are an essential cultural asset and a significant contributor to the economic vitality of our state. Teaching Artists, in particular, are dynamic and vibrant arts professionals who specialize in leading arts-learning and making experiences in educational and community settings, including schools, arts organizations, community centers, parks, libraries, wellness centers, detention centers, businesses, and other similar institutions.

We represent the Maryland chapter of the Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic (TAMA). TAMA is the only local agency supporting, empowering, and advocating for professional Teaching Artists. We serve the region as a model and resource for mid-Atlantic stakeholders who value and recognize Teaching Artists as influential paid professionals of an equitable and vibrant arts ecosystem. Unlike arts organizations with physical locations, most Teaching Artists do not operate from a fixed location and workplace, essentially, we are invisible. Yet, we work at the intersection of arts, education, and community, making our contributions all the more vital.

In Maryland, the arts sector is a formidable economic engine. For instance, the state's artists and cultural organizations generate \$837 million in economic activity annually, support eight thousand jobs, and return \$19.6 million in local and state tax revenues, as per the Maryland Department of Commerce FY2022 report. These figures underscore the undeniable impact of the arts on our economy. Teaching Artists leverage their artistic skills and expertise to create arts education and lifelong creative learning programs that grow meaningful connections, foster empathy and understanding, promote healing, address societal challenges, and facilitate personal growth and development. We empower individuals and communities to unlock their full potential to shape, change, create, and transform individuals, local communities, our nation, and the world for the better.

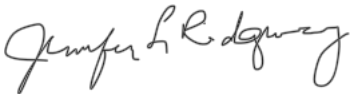
Despite these substantial contributions, artists face significant economic hardships. Teaching Artists, in particular, have to deal with the challenges of straddling the dual role of education and the arts. Moreover, traditional business sector policies tend to overlook artists altogether, leaving Teaching Artists vulnerable to exploitation. The majority of Teaching Artists work without a labor union. Primarily hired as part-time or independent contractors, often paid by the hour or the length of service, we lack traditional benefits, such as healthcare contributions, pensions, sick leave, and job security. HB1451 proposes an essential framework for addressing these economic challenges. It aims to further study the needs of artists and provide them with the support they need.

As small businesses, artists and Teaching Artists must be recognized and valued as paid professionals in Maryland. TAMA seeks to collaborate with legislators to ensure that policies that overlook our vital contributions to our communities receive urgent attention.

Please consider the profound impact your support of HB1451 could have on the lives of artists and the cultural wealth of Maryland. The artist incubator workgroup is a valuable initiative that must include input from Teaching Artists. We urge the Governor to appoint a Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic member as the artist-educator representative in this important initiative. We believe that Teaching Artists must actively participate in this workgroup to ensure that art-learning and art-making are at the heart of Maryland's future, enhancing the state's vibrancy and continued growth and transformation. Therefore, we urge you to vote YES for HB1451, ensuring our state remains a nurturing ground for the arts.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this pivotal issue.

Signed,



Jennifer Ridgway, President



Khaleshia Thorpe-Price, Maryland Director

**Across the state, 49 individual Teaching Artists and small businesses have pledged their support for HB1451:**

### **In Anne Arundel**

David Kenneth Hildebrand  
David & Ginger Hildebrand  
Annapolis, MD

### **In Baltimore City**

Christina Delgado  
Tola's Room  
Baltimore, MD

Christine Susan DeJuliis  
Baltimore, MD

Michael Lamason  
Black Cherry Puppet Theater  
Baltimore, MD

Katherine Lyons  
Baltimore, MD

Kathleen Kelly MacMillan  
Stories By Hand with Kathy  
MacMillan  
Baltimore, MD

Joanne Margolius  
Magical Experiences Arts  
Company  
Baltimore, MD

Anna Sellheim  
Refugee Youth Project  
Baltimore, MD

**BLACK CHERRY  
PUPPET THEATER**



### **In Baltimore County**

Lisa Anderson  
Milkshake Music LLC  
Baltimore, MD

Deborah Rachel Kleinmann  
Baltimore, MD

Valerie Leonhart Smalkin  
Small Kin Music/Silly Goose & Val  
Baltimore, MD



### **In Calvert County**

Dr. Candace Campbell  
Peripatetic Productions  
Chesapeake Beach, MD

## **In Charles County**

Thomas Jefferson Howell  
STEAM, a 501(c)3 nonprofit  
La Plata, MD

Monique Walker  
Waldorf, MD

## **In Frederick County**

Tricia L Fegley  
Myersville, MD

Christine Galante  
Frederick, MD

Jeffrey Warren Harrison  
Sunnyland Music & Multicultural Arts  
Emmitsburg, MD

Andrea McCluskey  
Frederick, MD

## **In Howard County**

Loretta Jean Foster  
Clay Happenings Again  
Columbia, MD

## **In Montgomery County**

Kathryn Aboudou  
Takoma Park, MD

Steven L. Barker  
Gaithersburg, MD

Noa Baum  
Silver Spring, MD

Liliane Blom  
Liliane Blom Art Studio  
Rockville, MD

J. Jordan Bruns  
Art Clinic at Glen Echo Park  
Glen Echo, MD

Paula Marie Cleggett  
Rockville, MD

Roberta M. Gasbarre  
Silver Spring, MD

Mary Gresock  
Silver Spring, MD

Arturo Ho  
Silver Spring, MD

Jamie Iwugo  
Takoma Park, MD

Denise M. Jones  
Brass Ring Company  
Takoma Park, MD

Renee Sandell  
ForThCo Vision LLC  
Bethesda, MD

Annetta Dexter Sawyer  
Silver Spring, MD

Deborah Sternberg  
Germantown, MD

Laura Sturza  
Laura Sturza, Writer/Teacher  
Rockville, MD

Khaleshia Thorpe-Price  
Dramatic Play LLC  
Gaithersburg, MD

Michele A. Valeri  
Dinorock Productions  
Silver Spring, MD

Marcie Wolf-Hubbard  
Silver Spring, MD



## In Prince George's County

Eileen C. Cave  
Hyattsville Community Arts  
Alliance  
Hyattsville, MD

Saige Colbert  
A D4ME Production LLC  
Mount Rainier, MD

Henry Harris  
Strategic Music Partnerships  
Fort Washington, MD

LaShawnte' Holloman-Clay  
Sculpted Clay Productions LLC  
Upper Marlboro, MD

Don Junious Johns  
DMV Music Academy  
Hyattsville, MD

Alicia Oliver-Krueger  
InterAct Story Theatre Education  
Association  
Glenn Dale, MD

Jennifer Lynn Ridgway  
Yard Dramas LLC  
Hyattsville, MD

Melissa Richardson  
Brentwood, MD

Alice Lorraine Robinson  
Fort Washington, MD

Laura Catherine Schandelmeier  
Dance Box Theater  
Brentwood, MD



## **In Washington County**

Dawn K. Hoffman  
Dawn Arts Design  
Hagerstown, MD

## **In Wicomico County**

Stephen Philip Harvey  
Hidden Cinema Records LLC  
Salisbury, MD