



**HIPPODROME  
THEATRE** *at the*  
**FRANCE-MERRICK**  
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

February 10, 2026

Dear Honorable Jheanelle Wilkins, Chair, and Members House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the renewal of the Maryland Theatrical Production Tax Credit and to share the tangible, measurable impact this program has already had on Baltimore, Maryland's workforce, and the national theatrical industry.

Since the implementation of the tax credit, we have been able to launch one pre-Broadway engagement and five Broadway national tours in Maryland, with three additional tours already scheduled for the 2026–2027 season and more expected beyond that. These launches would not have occurred in Maryland without the support of this program.

To date, the additional weeks of work generated for union labor through these launches have resulted in:

- \$2.2 million in gross pre-tax wages
- \$634,000 in union benefits
- \$250,000 in employer-paid payroll taxes

Looking ahead to currently scheduled productions, we expect an additional:

- \$866,000 in gross pre-tax wages
- \$263,000 in benefits
- \$100,000 in employer-paid payroll taxes

Beyond these direct figures, these wages circulate through the local economy. Theatre workers spend their income on housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and entertainment in Maryland. Using conservative economic multipliers commonly applied to arts and entertainment spending, every dollar paid in wages generates additional downstream economic activity for local businesses and service providers. The result is a meaningful boost to the regional economy that extends well beyond the theatre itself.

Equally important, the tax credit has helped establish a new national tradition of launching Broadway tours from Baltimore, positioning the city as the industry's preferred place to begin a tour. General managers, producers, actors, and touring crews consistently express how well they are treated here, and there is genuine excitement when a production learns it will launch from the Hippodrome Theatre. This reputation has been an extraordinary asset for Baltimore and for Maryland.

Audiences in Baltimore also benefit directly. They are among the very first in North America to experience these productions before they play any other city. The program has also attracted world-class artists and producers to Maryland, most notably Andrew Lloyd Webber and Cameron Mackintosh,



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who chose to bring their newest production of *The Phantom of the Opera* back to the United States through Baltimore. Their experience here has made them enthusiastic champions of our theatre and our city.

In addition, each launch allows us to invite more than 800 students to attend open dress rehearsals at no cost before the show officially opens. For many of these students, it is their very first Broadway experience—an opportunity that can inspire a lifelong connection to the arts and creative industries.

The Maryland Theatrical Production Tax Credit has proven to be an effective, high-return investment. It creates jobs, generates tax revenue, supports organized labor, attracts global talent, elevates Maryland's cultural profile, and provides extraordinary experiences for residents and students alike.

I respectfully urge the legislature to renew this bill and allow this successful program to continue growing. Its impact is already clear, and its future potential is even greater.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Chris Mahan  
Vice President  
France-Merrick Performing Arts Center