



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 287
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for consideration of SB287. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC) is an acting company and theater in Downtown Baltimore that performs Shakespeare and classic plays. Currently in the midst of our 18th Season, we serve 32,000 patrons each year, including 16,000 school children. We perform 7 to 9 plays each year, with both an indoor and a summer season outside at the historic Patapsco Female Institute Park in Howard County. Teachers in the region have come to rely on CSC's productions to teach Romeo & Juliet, and Macbeth. People of all ages, families, Veterans, senior citizens and young adults flock to our theater and to the PFI to see fun, and engaging shows performed by our resident acting company of diverse theater professionals.

Chesapeake Shakespeare Company supports SB287 as a reliable funding source for arts organizations. At a time when philanthropic giving has been shrinking enormously, and capital needs are increasing, a predictable fund will help organizations by reducing the amount of work required to locate, cultivate and win a grant. CSC has renovated and now occupies two historic properties. We live with the reality of always having to decide between funding a necessary capital improvement to sustain our physical plant, or funding our programming. We often have major capital expenditures (new roofing, HVAC efficiencies, accessibility improvements and supports for individuals with physical, mental and emotional disabilities, better storage, etc) that we cannot budget for or tackle as a project because we need to fund our productions and our education programming. We can appreciate that having a consistent capital fund source administered by MSAC could streamline the process of applying for and receiving capital funding grants.

One immediate need we would use this funding for is replacing our 30 year old HVAC system, which experts tell us is on its "last legs". We have been fund raising for this project for 2 years. A grant from the Maryland State Capital Grant fund would help us complete this project now.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB 287.

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