



MARYLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS

January 29, 2020

Senator Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West-Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 287-Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program- SUPPORT

Dear Senator Guzzone and Committee Members,

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 287- Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program. This bill would help nonprofit arts organizations apply for necessary funding to improve their arts facilities to enhance their positive impact in their communities.

I can attest to the great value and impact of arts participation from my years-long experience training and performing as a ballet/contemporary dancer, actor, and cellist. My dance training started when I was four years old, and I started playing the cello at age nine. I also performed in plays/musicals throughout my student life. My academic and personal achievements were shaped by my well-rounded education in dance, theater, and music, and the experience I gained performing in front of audiences instilled my self-confidence. From age 18-25, I performed professionally in dance and music, while also earning degrees in Dance and Arts Administration from Goucher College.

Today I work full-time at the Maryland Center for the Arts as the Operations Manager, overseeing program/event development, fundraising, and the marketing of our educational arts programs and capital project. We are building a new multi-purpose arts center on a 41-acre wooded site in Bel Air that was gifted to us from the Emily Bayless Graham Estate. Our purpose in building this facility is to provide much needed space for local schools and arts organizations to present performances, art exhibits, educational programs/workshops, and special gatherings for the arts.

I, among many others, have personally experienced the power of the arts. Not only do the arts inspire and challenge, they also have a unique way of expanding one's intelligence and perspective. Learning how to play music on an instrument improves understanding of math and learning how to tell a story through acting improves reading, writing, and speaking skills. As Rep. Alma Adams once said: "The arts are a universal language that help us understand diversity, cultures and our most complex issues... Each generation has its own unique set of challenges, but it is through the arts and humanities that we learn compassion, understanding and critical thinking skills that enable us to address these problems and find solutions."

Thank you for carefully considering the Maryland Arts and Cultural Capital Grant Program to enhance arts programs and facilities in the State of Maryland to continue to positively impact the lives of residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

Amanda Pugh
Operations Manager, Maryland Center for the Arts

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