



**NATION^{OF}
MAKERS**

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Nation of Makers

Testimony Presented to the Senate Finance Committee

SB 826

Economic Development: Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

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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 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 (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 municipalities 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.

For these reasons, the **MD State Representative for Nation of Makers** encourages a favorable report on SB 826.