

Dorothy Jones-Davis, Ph.D  
Executive Director  
Nation of Makers  
110 University Blvd #752  
Silver Spring, MD 20918  
Tel: 202.495.0873  
[dorothy@nationofmakers.us](mailto:dorothy@nationofmakers.us)



**NATION OF  
MAKERS**

## **Testimony Presented to the Senate Finance Committee**

### **SB 826 - Economic Development: Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program**

**March 3, 2020**

Nation of Makers is a national nonprofit committed to supporting America's maker organizations through community building, resource sharing, and advocacy. Much of the work we do takes place locally, on the state and regional level, supporting local maker organizations and ecosystems to enhance the impact of the maker movement nationally. Our Nation of Makers' Champions program identifies local leaders who are championing the maker movement in their region, and supports them as they foster a local ecosystem that not only furthers the maker movement, but also the economic, social, and cultural impact that maker organizations have on the local economy. In support of our mission, we are proud to partner with local maker organizations, such as Open Works, who are having a significant economic/social/cultural impact within their community, to create opportunities for all Americans to succeed through making where they live.

Open Works, in particular, has quickly grown into a national leader in the maker movement. This impactful makerspace has set a new precedent for the ability of makerspaces to deliver economic impact, diversified a field that has historically low representation of ethnic and racial minorities and women, and delivered high-quality educational programming in fabrication, design, and entrepreneurship to learners of all ages and backgrounds in Maryland. Additionally, in a field with limited documented best practices, Open Works has developed a valuable set of operational competencies that can help other municipalities in Maryland derive similar economic, social, and educational benefits from the makerspaces within their community.

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 legislation 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. Furthermore, 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.

We are proud of the work that Open Works is doing within the great state of Maryland, and we are excited for the promise of SB826 and the positive economic impact it will have on the entire state. For these reasons, Nation of Makers encourages a favorable vote on SB826.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Jones-Davis', with a decorative flourish at the end.

Dorothy Jones-Davis, PhD  
Executive Director, Nation of Makers