

Testimony Presented to the House Ways and Means Committee HB1455 – Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program February 28, 2020

The Coppin State University (CSU) has a 120-year legacy as a community-centric institution of higher education in Baltimore City. The CSU College of Business is committed to providing “quality business education, inspiring learners, and launching business career as a path to lifelong success.”

Coppin’s commitment to community engagement led to the establishment of a formal collaboration with Open Works soon after their opening in 2016. As the first public HBCU in the nation to have a formal relationship with a community-embedded makerspace, we have completed several successful initiatives, including receiving the “2017 Greater Baltimore Committee Strategic Partnerships Award” and completing the “2019 Turning Makerspaces into Greater Places: Organizational Assessment and Economic Impact Study.” The “Greater Spaces and Places” research is the first of its kind and established an empirical basis for continuing to build sustainable social and economic impact through research, student engagement, and institutional networking.

Open Works has attracted domestic and global attention through their leadership in many success indicators such as diversity, educational programming, community partnerships, and economic impact. The presentation of Open Works’ outcomes was celebrated at the 2019 European Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation as potential solutions to barriers encountered by aspiring entrepreneurs in economically challenged communities. The staff and membership at Open Works value their maker community, available space for pursuit of creative endeavors, access to tools, and affordable cost as revealed by the “Greater Spaces and Places,” research report. The importance of community has led to the current research project relating to trust and relational competencies required for makerspace sustainability.

The Open Works story and best practices constitute a narrative that will be valuable to others. The non-lapsing fund administered by TEDCO will facilitate the sharing of best practices with other makerspaces and municipalities in the State of Maryland. Emerging maker organizations will improve their ability to deliver services and pathways to economic growth. The operational support provided by successful passage of this bill will help ensure the sustainability of makerspaces in Maryland by providing opportunities for greater productivity and private fundraising.

For these reasons, the Coppin State University College of Business encourages a favorable



College of Business

Mission: CSU College of Business provides quality business education, inspires learners, and launches business careers as a path to lifelong success.

vote on HB1455.