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House Appropriations Committee

Testimony from Maryland Humanities re:
HB1053

March 3, 2021

Maryland Humanities offers this testimony in support of proposed HB1053. This bill would require mandated level funding at the FY21 level in FY23 and hopefully restore the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) as a recipient of critical grant funding for its educational programming for youth via the SAI (“State-Aided Institution”) grant program of the Maryland State Department of Education.

Thank you to the committee for its past support of this vital resource for non-profit organizations that offer critical, supplementary educational experiences to Maryland youth. Maryland Humanities is one of 56 nonprofits currently funded through the program and currently is one of 44 nonprofits collectively advocating on behalf of the SAI program as part of MASO, or the Maryland Alliance of SAI Organizations. CBF is a fellow MASO member, despite having been cut from the SAI program in FY21 and proposed again in FY22.

Efforts to sustain the SAI program and restore funding to FY20 levels—including the inclusion once more of CBF—are so necessary. Nonprofits provide essential experiential learning opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Maryland students annually. This bill is a positive first step in that direction.

Maryland Humanities programs reach students in every jurisdiction—all 23 counties and Baltimore City. Our statewide **Maryland History Day—our only program directly supported by SAI funding**—served more than 30,000 middle and high school students from all 24 jurisdictions during the 2019–20 school year, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and remote learning.

We respectfully ask the members of the committee to approve the bill and support any additional efforts to restore funding for the program to the FY20 level, which totaled \$6,276,446.