

HB310 Capital Arts Bill Letters MCA.pdf

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maryland citizens for the arts

January 19, 2021

To: Appropriations Committee
Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Delegate Mark Chang, Vice Chair
CC: Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee

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STAFF

Nicholas Cohen

Executive Director

Amanda Morell

Program Manager

Morgan Brown

Program Coordinator

RE: TESTIMONY LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF HB310 - The Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

As the state-wide arts advocacy organizations, MCA is happy to provide 27 letters of support from the following:

1. Maryland Citizens for the Arts
2. Queen Annes County Center for the Arts
3. Allegheny Arts Council
4. Sandy Spring Museum, Montgomery County
5. Arena Players, Baltimore City
6. Baltimore County Government
7. Dorchester Center for the Arts
8. Garrett County Arts County
9. Howard County Center for the Arts
10. Maryland Federation of Art, Anne Arrundle County
11. Wide Angle Youth Media, Baltimore City
12. Marlow Guitar International, Montgomery County
13. Motor House, Baltimore City
14. Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance
15. Young Audiences of Maryland
16. Baltimore Rock Opera Society
17. Frederick Arts Council
18. Glorystar Music Education, Montgomery County
19. Kent Cultural Alliance
20. Joes movement Emporium, Prince George's County
21. Th Walters Art Museum, Baltimore City
22. Bach in Baltimore
23. Mount Vernon Place Conservancy, Baltimore City
24. Hippodrome Foundation, Baltimore City
25. Children's Theater of Annapolis
26. Blackrock Center for the Arts
27. Young Artists of Strathmore



maryland citizens for the arts

January 05, 2021

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

TRUSTEES

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Ryan Rilette

Michael Ross

Leon Seemann

Benjamin Simons

Daniel Singh

STAFF

Nicholas Cohen

Executive Director

Amanda Morell

Program Manager

Morgan Brown

Program Coordinator

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Many of these organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed due to health and safety concerns. Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations continue to invest in necessary programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important engagement initiatives. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations that demand critical access to capital funds. In every region of Maryland, we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Respectfully,

Executive Director



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Centreville, MD 21617

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Rick Strittmater
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310

Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

At the Queen Anne's County Arts Council/Centre for the Arts, we support this bill because arts organizations come in all sizes in the state of Maryland which is what it takes to reach all of our communities. In Queen Anne's County, we continue to provide art services and programs in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our county is rural and some people live in the far corners, yet we continue to reach most of our citizens as often as possible through our efforts and the efforts of the smaller organizations that we support. In the coming year, mor than ever, we need additional support to keep our doors open and the people's services functioning.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,

Rick Strittmater
Executive Director
Queen Anne's County Centre for the Arts
queenannescountyarts.com
443 904 0646 (M)
qacartsdirector@gmail.com

www.queenannescountyarts.com

The Queen Anne's County Arts Council is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization committed to promoting, expanding, and sustaining the arts.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a capital grant fund which will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

The Program will establish a five-year capital funding mechanism aimed to benefit arts organizations with less than \$3 million annual operating budget. The bill would support the vast majority of arts organizations across the state of Maryland and supplement funding which is nearly always limited to operational uses.

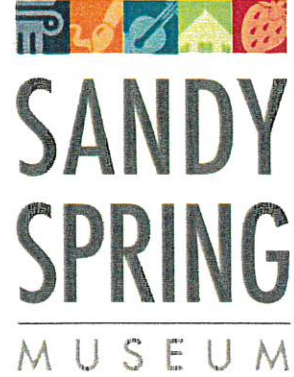
Alliegany County is consistently ranked as one of the poorest counties in the State of Maryland. Like many rural communities decimated by the departure of manufacturing and industry, we have turned to other avenues to revitalize, with arts and culture emerging as a growing force in our area. While we often hear of massive investments made in cities and other parts of our state, we face many of the same challenges – and more. Drugs, vagrancy, inadequate housing, lack of transportation and a loss of hope impact our community in a real and tangible way. **In our community, art and culture is not a simple luxury; it is a path to pulling out and up, and it is critical to our survival.**

Unlike many of our counterparts across the state, our pool of available philanthropists is small and these dollars are sought by many competing organizations; in fact, the largest gift we received from any individual in 2020 was \$7,000 – hardly providing for any type of capital effort. This program would create a game-changing impact in our community and allow us to purchase a building which would provide additional space for arts education, retail and income generation.

The Allegany Arts Council serves as the umbrella organization for the arts in our County of more than 70,000 residents. We not only support our own initiatives, but the work of more than 15 other arts agencies through direct financial support. We serve as a major anchor in downtown Cumberland, and provide tangible support for other businesses, including restaurants, shops and related services. While Allegany County's economic footprint across the State is small, the Arts Council has an enormous presence in our community.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Julie Westendorff,
Executive Director, Allegany Arts Council
9 N. Centre Street, Cumberland, MD 21502
jwestendorff@alleganyarts.org
301.777.2787



January 06, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Sandy Spring Museum and many other arts organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. We serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on Sandy Spring Museum, which has been operating at an extremely reduced capacity due to health and safety concerns. We and other arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, our organizations continue to invest in necessary programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important engagement initiatives. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left us and other organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations that demand critical access to capital funds. We believe that with dedicated capital arts investment, Sandy Spring Museum can be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,

Allison Weiss
Executive Director



Arena Players, Inc. 801 McCulloh Street Baltimore, MD 21201 410-728-6500 www.arenaplayerinc.com

January 11, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

As one of Baltimore oldest arts organizations, Arena Players Incorporated, supports legislation that makes accessing state funding easier for small arts organizations, particularly culturally specific organizations like Arena Players Inc. The parameters around state funding have always been prohibitive and/or the application process too arduous for the actual award. The Maryland State Arts Council has implemented several long overdue application and accessibility changes, in this regard. We support SB323/HB310 along with the revised and/ or restructuring of the application and assessment process.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

David D. Mitchell

David D. Mitchell
Managing Director
Arena Players Incorporated
www.ArenaPlayersInc.com



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
*Director, Department of Economic
and Workforce Development*

January 12, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Many of these organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed due to health and safety concerns. They have been one of the first to close, and the larger venues will be the last to open. The budgets of arts entities are overstretched, at a time when their programming could not be more critical to serve the mental health of our communities. Additionally, these organizations have needed to pivot to innovative programming, involving higher technology and other capital investments that might not fit their traditional model of operation, again straining their budgets. Investments in capital costs will be critical as the public returns to these spaces.

Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations continue to invest in necessary programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important engagement initiatives. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations that demand critical access to capital funds. In every region of Maryland, we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

For these reasons, I urge a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323.

Sincerely,

LJ Howie III

Leonard Howie
Director, Department of Economic and Work Force Development



321 High Street, Cambridge, MD 21613 • 410-228-7782 • 410-221-6589 (fax)
www.dorchesterarts.org



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January 05, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Here at the Dorchester Center for the Arts in Cambridge, MD- the state-designated arts council for Dorchester—over 13,000 individuals from pre-school to seniors are served each year with arts opportunities onsite, and hundreds more offsite throughout the county. The organization is housed in a historic building, the former Nathan Furniture Store. This building plays an important role in county and state history, and the DCA organization is completely responsible for repair and capital improvements. For 50 years we have been the primary arts provider for Dorchester County.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the financial health of our organization. We experienced a lengthy and mandated closure and saw all our fundraising events and onsite programs cancelled. Yet we used what funding we could to develop virtual programming to continue to serve our community, and to invest in the engagement process that keeps the arts alive in Dorchester. We are facing the need for immediate capital improvements at a time when we are desperately trying to maintain the necessary level of arts support for our county. Our commitment to preserving this historic building and our role in the arts community has not wavered; but we cannot wait for access to capital funding.

This grant program provides an equitable path and process for countless cultural arts organizations such as ours that demand critical access to capital funds. I am so proud of Maryland’s support of the arts. This is just the next step to be taken for Maryland to continue to be an arts leader in the nation and for Dorchester to be able to share the gift of art with generations to come.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,
Barbara J. Seese
Executive Director



P.O. Box 633 • Oakland, MD 21550 • 301-334-6580 • garrettarts.org

January 12, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

The Garrett County Arts Council (GCAC) is a 501 C 3 organization funded in part by the Maryland State Arts Council and Garrett County Government. GCAC presently has a regional membership of 450 artists and community supporters.

GCAC's strategic plan for the next decade is to expand rural entrepreneurship opportunities, increase education access and youth engagement, and expand a creative workforce. All this will contribute to personal and community economic and development success enabling rural residents to thrive in rural communities. GCAC is looking at two capital improvement projects to support art entrepreneurship to be started within the next two-five years. At opposite ends of our county, both projects are exciting and will need feasibility studies, community needs assessment and grant development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with in rural Maryland. Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Our focus over the last nine months has been in assisting our local arts organizations and independent artists with necessary programming and community engagement. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process. The Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program provides an equitable path and process for arts and culture organizations like ours access to critical capital funds.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

All my best,

Kathy Beachler, Executive Director
Garrett County Arts Council

PO Box 633 • 108 S. Second Street, Suite 1

Oakland, MD 21550

(p) 301.334.6580

(e) kathy@garrettarts.org

www.garrettarts.org • www. SEYMOURart.org



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 310 Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for consideration of HB 310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program has two components - a competitive grant program for large institutions (\$3 m+ budgets) and another one for mid-size to small institutions that is open to both arts supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

The Howard County Arts Council serves a vibrant and growing arts community which will require greater capital resources to meet the demand of our growing audiences. Last spring, the Howard County Arts Council, at the request of our County State Delegation drafted **The Capital Arts Projects Request Application (CAPRA) Pre-Submission Guidelines for the Downtown Columbia Arts District**. The purpose of CAPRA is to establish an annual, pre-submission review process for Downtown Columbia capital arts funding requests and present prioritized projects to the Howard County State Delegation for further consideration. The process can be used as a model if needed.

The Howard County Arts Council also operates the Howard County Center for the Arts, a 32,000 square foot, multi-purpose arts facility located in Ellicott City. The Arts Center features two professional galleries, an intimate black box theatre, three classrooms, meeting and office spaces, a dance studio, and individual artists' studios. At the Art Center (pre-COVID), we present 10-12 exhibitions, provide low-cost meeting and studio space for artists, and offer year-round classes in the visual arts, music, theater and dance for people of all ages. Each year, nearly 40,000 visitors browse through the galleries, take a class or attend an event at the Center.

The Center is a valuable community resource, where people of all ages and skill levels can develop and learn, artists can work and teach, and community arts organizations can establish themselves and grow. It is also an important venue for the work of both emerging and professional artists and provides a supportive, creative environment for the production and appreciation of artwork in all disciplines. The Center is located in a former elementary school built in 1961, which is in need of capital improvements.

Further, plans for the construction of the New Cultural Center, which will be located in Downtown Columbia, are moving forward. This project will likely need the support of state capital funds.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 310.

Coleen West, Executive Director, Howard County Arts Council
8510 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043
410.313.ARTS(2787)
coleen@hocoarts.org



MARYLAND FEDERATION OF ART

January 6, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland Federation of Art is a small visual arts organization whose mission is to create connections in the community through art. MFA is a small organization, according to our budget, but our program is national in reach and a vibrant part of Maryland's art environment. Currently, 636 of our 800 members are from Maryland and we work with more than 6000 Maryland artists and art patrons each year, hosting almost 40 exhibitions across the state each year.

Our program may soon require that we purchase additional space where artists can create and exhibit their work. As executive director of this 68-year-old visual arts organization I am currently seeking space where we can grow our program and expand our mission.

This will be impossible without the financial support that SB323/HB310 would provide, especially to small organizations like MFA with a budget of \$400,000 and a staff of three. Unlike large non-profits in the state that can lobby the legislature directly, organizations like MFA both need and deserve access to capital funds from the states in order to improve our communities. Funding such as SB323/HB310 will help level the playing field for those of us who work every day to make Maryland a better place to live, work and visit.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joann Vaughan', is written over a printed name and title.

Joann Vaughan
MFA Executive Director



WIDE ANGLE YOUTH MEDIA

2601 North Howard St. Suite 160 Baltimore, MD 21218 www.wideanglemedia.org

1/12/21

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310 Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Through media arts education, Wide Angle Youth Media (Wide Angle) cultivates and amplifies the voices of Baltimore youth to engage audiences across generational, cultural, and social divides. Our programs inspire creativity and instill confidence in young people, empowering them with skills to navigate school, career, and life. Support for the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) has helped Wide Angle serve thousands of youth from across Baltimore City, who have produced hundreds of digital media projects about their lives and communities. Their continued support during COVID-19 has allowed us to keep our doors open.

Continued funds from MSAC are a critical resource not only for Wide Angle, but for organizations throughout Maryland, and capital dollars will be particularly helpful to agencies like ours to transition back to in-person programs after the pandemic. Over the past year, Wide Angle has partnered with MSAC to create short documentaries highlighting arts and entertainment districts in our state. Our production team has documented the economic and cultural impact of the arts across the state of Maryland, and we've captured scores of testimonials from local artists and arts agencies about the importance of the arts to the local economy.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Include your name and contact information at the bottom.

Susan Malone



January 12, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Marlow Guitar International is one of the major classical guitar non-profits serving the Washington Metropolitan area and widely known and recognized for its major programming and community engagement primarily in Montgomery County. Although a capital grant fund would not directly assist us now, I believe that it would substantially assist our partners who provide venues for our musicians to perform and showcase their talent. In addition, it would help sustain their facility to allow us to fulfill our programming for our Marlow Guitar Youth Competition and the Marlow Guitar for Veterans. As we all know, the Covid-19 pandemic has devastated the economy but much of the adversity has also affected the arts and for us, all our musicians. It's essential to provide the capital funding as soon as possible so that the resources can focus directly on programming for the arts.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

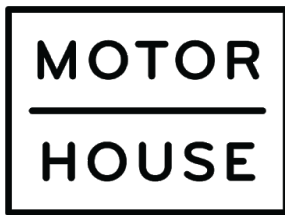
Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Clifford W. Moy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long tail on the final letter.

Clifford W. Moy

President

Board of Directors



The Motor House
120 W North Ave
Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 637 - 8307
motorhousebaltimore.com

January 11, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Motor House is a small arts organization that serves the emerging artist community in Baltimore City. In many ways, Motor House is a conduit that provides space, funding, and support for these artists that larger organizations can not. This bill would provide financial and political support for organizations like ours that have a huge impact on people in real, tangible ways.

It is imperative that this bill is passed this year. The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are going to be excruciating for arts organizations in general, and small to mid-sized organizations in particular. Having an intentional funding source for these organizations ensures that we will be able to pull ourselves out of the quicksand that the pandemic has caused us.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Camille Kashaka", written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Camille Kashaka
Executive Director
Motor House
camille@motorhousebaltimore.com

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120 W. North Ave

Suite 305

Baltimore, MD 21201

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www.baltimoreculture.orgwww.culturefly.org

January 12, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program**

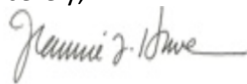
As Executive Director of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA), I am writing to thank you for your consideration of and to urge you to support SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year, and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Many of these organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to the elderly and do so in buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed. Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations continue to invest in programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on for the benefit of their communities. On behalf of GBCA's membership from throughout the region, I can safely state that the strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations, particularly those smaller organizations throughout Maryland that lack the political alliances or infrastructure to seek capital support through the current process. An investment in a dedicated capital arts fund, will ensure that Maryland can continue to be an arts and culture leader in the nation. I urge you to support this effort that will make sure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today. **For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.**

Sincerely,



Jeannie L. Howe
Executive Director



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning

Maryland

Stacie Sanders Evans
President and CEO

January 12, 2021

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Kiati Plooksawasdi

Gerren Price

Thomas Sessa

Courtney Zellmer

Lois Mark, *Emeritus*

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. In addition to having great economic benefit for our state, arts organizations are critical to ensuring that both communities and individuals, in every corner of our state, thrive. They serve a broad range of Marylanders, from toddlers to advanced ages, and help all of us to connect and build community. And, they do so while working in buildings that are many times in dire need of capital improvements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed due to health and safety concerns. And, especially at this moment, arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, arts organizations continue to invest their available resources in maintaining employment and safely engaging their constituents.

The Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program provides an increasingly transparent and equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations in need of access to capital funds. Vibrant, community-minded arts organizations greatly benefit constituents in every area of our state. With a dedicated capital arts investment, Maryland's arts and culture economy can continue to thrive, ensuring that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,

Stacie Evans
Chief Executive Officer



BALTIMORE ROCK OPERA SOCIETY

Baltimore Rock Opera Society, Inc. (BROS)

EIN: 47-1406439

1/08/21

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310 Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program has two components - a competitive grant program for large institutions (\$3 m+ budgets) and another one for mid-size to small institutions that is open to all kinds of essential arts organizations in Maryland. These arts organizations are completely vital to our culture, our economy and the long-term success of Maryland as a leader in the region's future.

Baltimore Rock Opera Society (BROS) is a vital organization in the Baltimore City and Baltimore regional arts environment. We are a linchpin organization that creates gigantic collaborative arts projects that bring together artists and audiences of many different age groups, demographics and abilities. We create exciting original rock theater where amateurs, experienced professionals, young artists in training and early career artists go to exchange ideas, train each other and create some of the most visionary work to ever emerge from Charm City. Although Baltimore currently has many productive and groundbreaking small arts organizations, those companies are in great danger of being priced out of the neighborhoods that they helped to establish. As Baltimore's future economic outlook improves, there is little evidence to suggest that Baltimore's arts organizations will share in that improvement. **This program is URGENT to ensure that dynamic and vital cultural organizations such as BROS are able to gain a foothold in Baltimore and to guarantee that art has a role in the city and the region's future. If the bill is passed this year, we believe it could play a vital role in helping to fund the renovations of a new, nationally recognized performance home for BROS in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District.**

Help keep Baltimore and Maryland's Arts Communities alive and vital! In order for this region to continue to attract wealth and investment we must be able to deliver nationally recognized cultural experiences. Arts organizations can't deliver their best to audiences if they can't fund the capital projects that will keep them alive. For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Rock on!
Aran Keating
Executive Director
Baltimore Rock Opera Society (BROS)
aran@baltimorerockopera.org - 410-212-4473
<http://www.baltimorerockopera.org>



January 8, 2021

Testimony in Support of Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Program (SB323/HB310)

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations that demand critical access to capital funds. With dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed due to health and safety concerns. Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations continue to invest in necessary programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important engagement initiatives. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

Frederick County is considered one of the most art-centric communities in the state and the arts are fueling our economic vibrancy but we cannot fulfill our potential without a source of capital support that this bill would provide. The number one concern cited among our artists --and arts organizations -- is a lack of space. From the individual studio artist to the Frederick Symphony Orchestra, our arts stakeholders are not able to stabilize and grow without the infrastructure necessary to provide accessible programming. SB323/HB310 creates a program that promises equity in distribution of funds, and allows the critical arts services we provide to flourish. The Frederick Arts Council is itself in the early stages of restoring a church in downtown Frederick. The community arts center will house our public art program and serve as a community center for arts and culture. The 8000 square foot building will create a space for us to serve the people of Frederick County, our thousands of public school students, and the many visitors who come to experience the unique cultural amenities Frederick has to offer. We know this fund would help us complete this important project and would also help the nearly two dozen grantee organizations we support who are doing work in all corners of our county.

In addition, our project Sky Stage, an award-winning outdoor amphitheater and public art sculpture that has been featured by the National Governors Association as a creative way to jumpstart local economies and connect neighbors, is the type of project that would benefit from this legislation and boost not only the community but the state in drawing visitors and positive attention. For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

In appreciation, 

Louise Kennelly Executive Director Frederick Arts Council 11 West Patrick St. Frederick Maryland 217



Glorystar Music Education and Cultural Foundation

15800 Crabbs Branch Way Suite 300 Rockville, MD 20855
www.glorystar.org | info@glorystar.org | 240-277-7629

January 11, 2021

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310 Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute to a vital part of our local and state education excellence and our outstanding quality of life. Citizens young and old are enriched by the numerous arts organizations in our state who seek to provide opportunities to create life affirming and uplifting expressions of art. Benefits of excellent arts education and expression are felt in all areas of life.

The Glorystar Children's Chorus has been providing excellent music education to youth in Maryland for 25 years. We have witnessed the numerous positive effects our program has had on our students and their families. In particular, the Asian community from which most of our students are a part of.

This year has been particularly difficult for arts organizations like ours who have experienced decreased enrollment, decreased income, and smaller fundraising outcomes yet at the same time have higher expenses due to transitioning to online teaching and performances. It has been a struggle to survive but various grants have been vital to keeping our organization going. More funding for arts organizations like ours is essential to help weather the challenges of the pandemic this year and to plan for rebuilding our program in the future.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Carol L. Tseng
Executive Director
Glorystar Children's Chorus



January 8, 2021

Thank you for consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

The Kent Cultural Alliance (formerly the Kent County Arts Council) serves Maryland's smallest and most rural community. Kent County does not have access to the large corporate arts funders of Montgomery County and Baltimore City. We also do not have a large population of wealthy philanthropists who are able to make multi-million dollar gifts to nonprofits. And, as a county arts council, we receive the smallest Community Arts Development grant of all 24 jurisdictions. SB323/HB310 creates a program that promises equity in distribution of funds, and allows the small but critical arts services we provide to flourish.

The Kent Cultural Alliance is itself in the early stages of restoring a 200 year old farm house in Downtown Chestertown as its new permanent home. The Raimond Arts Building, which includes a 1799 two and a half story frame dwelling, will serve as a community center for arts and culture. It will include a 1,000 sq. ft. multipurpose room for exhibits, workshops, education, performances and more and it will house a year-round visiting Artist Residency program for national and international artists (a first of its kind in Maryland.) The historic building is an anchor building for Main Street Chestertown and the Chestertown Arts & Entertainment District, and will soon become of the Network To Freedom. It is directly connected to the narrative of escaped slave, Isaac Mason, published in Worcester, MA in 1895. He was a house slave and was severely beaten during his enslavement by Mr. and Mrs. James Mansfield (owners of this house from 1830 - 1970.)

With a budget of \$2 million (and \$1,300,000 already raised) the now 5000 square foot building will create a space for us to serve the people of Kent County, our 2000+ public school students, and the many visitors who come to experience the unique cultural ecology this beautiful county. We know this fund would help us complete this important project by December 2021, and would also help the nearly two dozen grantee organizations and dozens of artists whom we support who are doing important work in all corners of Kent County, Maryland.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310. Thank you.

John Schratwieser, Director, Kent Cultural Alliance
john@kentculture.org - office 410-778-3700 or cell 410-708-9751
101 Spring Avenue, Chestertown, MD 21620



World Arts Focus
3309 Bunker Hill Road
Mount Rainier, MD 20712
301.699.1819
www.joesmovement.org

RARE. GRITTY. BRILLIANT.

January 11, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital funding for mid-size to small institutions that is open to arts organization supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Joe's Movement Emporium/World Arts Focus, Inc. is a mid-size organization that supports artist vitality and arts education. Located in Mt. Rainier, Prince George's County, the organization has evolved over the past 25 years from a single storefront studio into a multi-functional performance arts space. Joe's programs provide affordable, arts-based out-of-school services to students of all ages, a job training program, and artist services for hundreds of artists each year. Through this mix of programs and service, the local creative economy and immediately community benefit.

The creation of an Arts and Culture Grant Program would immediately support our efforts to address storm water issues on our property with innovative practices, including a green roof and special drainage for our parking lot. Finding resources for ongoing capital improvements are difficult for a mid-size organization in a county with minimal philanthropic foundations. Ongoing renovation needs are not that exciting to donors. It has taken significant time and resources to manage unfunded repairs and renovations. This fund would allow facilities like Joe's Movement Emporium to have options to compliment the investment in programs provided by Maryland State Arts Council.

Access to this grant program would ensure that capital projects could move forward by supporting construction and equipment costs. Having the Bill pass this year, would allow our project to meet match requirements from a regional foundation that is considering a grant request.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brooke Kidd".

Brooke Kidd,

Executive Director

brooke@joesmovement.org

301.404.9154 cell

January 11, 2021

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

The Walters Art Museum supports SB323/HB310 because it levels the playing field for many small- to mid-sized arts institutions to apply for essential capital funds. Even in normal circumstances, arts organizations face real challenges raising funds for necessary capital infrastructure or building efforts, and, consequently, frequently forego making needed improvements to their physical plant. Overseen by MSAC, the process will be clear for applicants and transparent for the public. This process will build confidence across institutions and in the public that public tax dollars are being distributed judiciously and fairly to community arts organizations throughout the State.

The arts are a major economic sector in the State and passing this bill during the current legislative session will move this important funding forward at a critical time. The support of the State of Maryland leverages private support for capital projects, and when contractors are based in our State, helps support the local economy. While the bill would preclude the Walters Art Museum and organizations with budgets over \$3 million from applying for this capital grant funding, we wholeheartedly support this bill to ensure the overall wellbeing of our sector.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,



Julia Marciari-Alexander, Ph.D.
Andrea B. & John H. Laporte Director



T. Herbert Dimmock, Founder & Music Director

Christ Lutheran Church Inner Harbor
701 S. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21230
www.BachInBaltimore.org
410-941-9262

January 9, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Many of these organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed due to health and safety concerns. Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations continue to invest in necessary programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important engagement initiatives. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process. This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations that demand critical access to capital funds. In every region of Maryland, we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

Bach in Baltimore strongly supports this bill, as it has been the grateful recipient of MSAC grants for the past two decades.

For these reasons, we ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323 & HB310.

T. Herbert Dimmock
Founder & Music Director

Rebecca Fanning
Administrative Manager

January 11, 2021



**Mount Vernon
Place**
Conservancy

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage with over 8 million arts visitors each year, and provide more than \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Many of these organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many arts organizations in Maryland, especially those with venues that have been closed due to health and safety concerns. Arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations continue to invest in necessary programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are spent on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important engagement initiatives. The strain of this economic and health crisis has left organizations in desperate need of access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

This grant program provides an equitable path and process for hundreds of arts and culture organizations that demand critical access to capital funds. In every region of Maryland, we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Respectfully,

Lance Humphries
Executive Director

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Ex Officio
Reginald Moore



Raising the curtain on opportunity.

January 12, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). The Program will make grant-giving by the State of Maryland more efficient for both the arts organizations and legislators, making sure that critical capital investment for the Maryland Arts sector continues via a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions. The MSAC is the perfect administrator of the capital fund decision making process as leadership and staff are the team especially aware of arts organization's current initiatives and can "balance the landscape" of organization initiatives to ensure there is not a flood of requests in any given year. Putting a system like this into place will strengthen relations between MSAC and the Maryland arts organizations which benefit from operational funding each year.

I ask for favorable support this year.

Sincerely,

Olive Waxter

Olive Waxter
Executive Director
410-804-4490

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Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 410.727.7787
Fax: 410.727.7783

HippodromeFoundation.org

January 11, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323 & HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Children's Theatre of Annapolis supports SB323/HB310 because growing our reach has become a major goal to nurture the growth and development of the love of theatre in children age 5 to 18, through participation in all aspects of the theatrical experience, including performance, workshops, technical elements, community involvement, and apprenticeships. CTA provides a positive circle of influence through friendships that foster self-esteem, creativity, commitment, teamwork, appreciation, and dedication. CTA serves the child and the community.

Our main theatre is a 276 seat theatre that holds 3 mainstage shows a year. Our annex is a rundown building (it used to be a garage for large military trucks) that has no insulation and is still heated by propane. At this time, this annex building is our education center that we use for all of our theatre education classes year-round.

CTA's goal to make the annex into an environmentally controlled 3 room building that would allow us to build our education program and extend our outreach to underserved families. With this new annex, our students will learn dancing, acting and music in a safe and warm building. The largest space will be a black box theatre that will seat 100. This smaller theater space will allow more intimate shows to be performed and offered to CTA's community. With this fully functioning theater space, CTA plans to open it up for other community groups to use, as CTA's blackbox will be the only one available for general rental in all of Anne Arundel County. We also plan to increase our teen shows and workshops that work better in a smaller space.

SB323/HB310 will help CTA to reach this goal and reach out to the entire community. For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,



April Forrer
Executive Director
aprilforrer@childrenstheatreofannapolis.org



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

In March 2020, BlackRock Center for the Arts closed its doors in response to COVID-19. The art in our galleries was returned to the artists. All performances, events, rentals, classes and camps were cancelled. All revenue streams were closed and in spite of the difficulty it posed, we honored all requests for refunds.

In the ten months that have followed we have offered online classes, exhibits and performances. Our Education Department has created a BlackRock in a Box art program that delivers boxes with art supplies to students of Title I schools. And we have transitioned our gallery into a HUB for the safe distribution of food and essentials to over 1000 families in our community every week.

As a performing arts venue we have risen to the challenges imposed by the virus. We take pride in continuing to offer arts education and programming while providing critical services to our community.

We will navigate the crisis and reopen but there will be no funds available for the improvements needed for an aging infrastructure that has now borne the wear and tear of the virus.

Arts organizations will reopen and slowly rebuild audiences and patrons. It is unlikely that most will be able to invest in items that are desperately needed. This legislation will fill that critical gap.

Therefore, I sincerely ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lynn Andreas Arndt".

Lynn Andreas Arndt
Chief Executive Officer
BlackRock Center for the Arts



January 11, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB323/HB310
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program**

Thank you for your consideration of SB323/HB310. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program provides critical capital investment for the Maryland arts sector through a competitive grant program for mid-size to small institutions open for arts organizations supported through the Maryland State Arts Council.

Young Artists of America at Strathmore (YAA) is a non-profit educational organization, based in North Bethesda, offering world-class musical theatre training to young performing artists in a professional and nurturing environment. Our students perform fully orchestrated works of musical theatre in state-of-the-art venues such as the Music Center at Strathmore, where we are an Affiliate. Through the creative process, we give students skills and confidence to “find their voice” on the stage and in life. Each year, we serve a diverse group of 500+ students, grades 5-12 (plus gap year students) and reach an audience of 5000+ from across the state, with 12+ performances and 1500+ hours of classes and rehearsals.

While YAA organization does not own or operate a building, our sector's continued success comes from support across the board for significant legislative initiatives like this. As YAA works to develop the next generation of performing artists and audiences, we must have a vibrant arts community for our students to experience. Against the backdrop of the challenges brought about by the pandemic, arts organizations—particularly small to mid-size arts organizations—lack the resources to divert money towards expensive but necessary capital improvements. This legislation will give them necessary support to keep the arts alive in our community and to prepare for the reopening of arts events in the near future.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB323/HB310.

Sincerely,

Lisa Larragoite

HB 310_Maryland Arts Capital Program_BEL testimony

Uploaded by: Lierman, Brooke

Position: FAV

BROOKE E. LIERMAN
Legislative District 46
Baltimore City

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Chair

Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Joint Committee on Pensions



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 311
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3319 · 301-858-3319
800-492-7122 Ext. 3319
Brooke.Lierman@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 310 * Maryland Arts Capital Program
January 20, 2021 at 1:30 PM
Appropriations Committee

What this bill does

This bill creates the Maryland Arts Capital Program (MAC), a competitive grant program for arts institutions in Maryland administered by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). It will ensure a more meritocratic process for awarding increasingly scarce capital dollars to these important institutions in our state. This bill will allocate \$3 million to the program every year from FY2023 - FY2028.

Medium and small arts organizations can be awarded up to \$1,000,000 for a project that would expand, renovate, or repair their facilities. Those who are awarded will have to match at least 25% of the award.

Why this bill matters

The Maryland arts sector is a robust community of arts organizations and independent artists that invest their time, energy, and talent in all corners of the state. Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.5 billion to the local and state economy, engage over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide over \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Arts organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

Many arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements and lobbying efforts. Instead, these organizations make the choice to spend on programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are invested on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important community engagement initiatives. These organizations often need access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on our arts organizations - most institutions have been closed since March, or for at least the majority of the days since March. The economic challenges have been significant and widespread. In a recent study utilizing data from the MD Department of Commerce and the MSAC, the art sector's total economic loss to

date caused by the pandemic has been over \$135 million. Additionally, the industry has suffered a loss of almost \$30 million in earned revenue and the forced loss of over 21,000 arts-related jobs (many of whom were contractually-hired artists and creative workers). These figures project a story of long-term financial challenges and a recovery that necessitates action that will help the arts sector not only get back on its feet but regain its status as one of the strongest economic sectors in our state.

Why should you vote for this bill

We face increasingly tight capital budgets and our institutions are competing for fewer and fewer capital dollars. These dollars should go to organizations that need them, not just those who are most politically connected. We should ensure that there is dedicated funding each year for small and mid-size arts organizations who can work through a known and transparent process to access grant dollars. In every region of Maryland we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

HB310 State Arts Council Grant .pdf

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Position: FAV

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 310 – Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program

Appropriations Committee - January 20, 2021

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Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.
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Jewish War Veterans
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Rabbinical Council of America
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Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
Shomrei Emunah Congregation
Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society
Suburban Orthodox Congregation
Temple Beth Shalom
Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
 Baltimore District

SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 310 (HB310) would establish the Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program with a mandated \$3 million-dollar yearly appropriation in the Governor's budget. It would be administered through the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). Eligible recipients must have operating budgets of less than \$3 million dollars, have a 25% waivable match, and participate in MSAC's Grants for Organizations Program or Community Arts Development Program.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies and programs, including the Gordon Center for Performing Arts. This Gordon is a 550-seat theater opened in 1995 and serves more than 30,000 people per year. If passed, the Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program could help the Gordon with much needed capital improvements. For this reason, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report on HB310.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL
5750 Park Heights Avenue, Suite 329 • Baltimore, Maryland 21215
410-542-4850 • fax 410-542-4834 • baltjc.org

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HB 310 MD Arts Capital Grant Program (Lierman)-APP

Uploaded by: Wilkins, Barbara

Position: INFO



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

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Secretary

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Deputy Secretary

HOUSE BILL 310 Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program (Lierman)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: January 20, 2021

COMMITTEE: House Appropriations

SUMMARY OF BILL: HB 310 creates a Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program to be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council with at least one full-time coordinator to run the Program, the purpose of which is to provide State grant funds to arts organizations with an operating budget of less than \$3 million for the expansion, renovation, or major repair of the organization’s facilities. The bill mandates an operating or capital appropriation of \$3 million annually in FY 2023 - FY 2028.

EXPLANATION: The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which requires spending allocations for FY 2022 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2020. DBM’s comments are not directed to the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the impact to a structurally balanced budget moving forward. Flexibility in allocating available funds is paramount, particularly when the aggregate of increased spending mandates is unsustainable. Spending growth continues to outpace revenue growth.

General Fund Budget Outlook Fiscal 2021-2026

(\$ in Millions)

	2021 Working <u>Approp.</u>	2022 <u>Baseline</u>	2023 Est.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Cash Balance	\$778	-\$632	-\$851	-\$851	-\$709	-\$611
Structural Balance	-\$649	-\$816	-\$566	-\$581	-\$450	-\$339

“However, it is important to note that revenue uncertainty as well as the potential for overrides of vetoes from the 2020 session, could impact this outlook.” Department of Legislative Services, December 2020 Spending Affordability Committee Report

Until we achieve long-term structural balance, programs cannot rely on a consistent funding level. Passage of this legislation does not guarantee future funding. Mandated appropriations are routinely repealed or modified in a subsequent Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA), which is necessary to ensure an annually balanced budget, as required by the Maryland Constitution.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19, making revenue predictions for the remainder of FY 2021 and FY 2022 highly volatile. Many individuals and households are unemployed or underemployed, with many industry sectors operating at much less than 100% capacity. Federal stimulus programs are providing much needed relief, but whether funds are sufficient to meet all COVID-related needs is another budgetary vulnerability.

The highest priority of the Administration is to work with the 2021 General Assembly in enacting the Governor's emergency Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act (RELIEF Act). The RELIEF Act provides \$1 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at
(410) 260-6371 or barbara.wilkins1@maryland.gov**