



**HIPPODROME
THEATRE** *at the*
FRANCE-MERRICK
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

January 18, 2021

Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 171 (Income Tax – Theatrical Production Tax Credit)

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

I am in full support of the Theatrical Production Tax Credit, Senate Bill 171-2021. For decades both Networks Entertainment, in Columbia Maryland, and Troika Entertainment, in Gaithersburg Maryland, have led the touring Broadway industry, sometimes producing up to 70% of all national touring Broadway shows each year. This is not only a cause for bragging rights, “Maryland is the home of National touring Broadway”, but a chance to encourage these companies to conduct pre-tour activities, technical rehearsals, and premier show openings/performances first, in their home state of Maryland.

The program encourages the use of qualified state-wide entertainment venues, many of which the state has a significant investments in, making them competitive with other venues located in the Northeast states that already offer similar tax incentives to musical and theatrical productions produced on Broadway.

Mandated closures and public health efforts have left live entertainment with no revenue opportunity and no foreseeable return of normal business. This large scale, long term shutdown will likely extend well into 2021. The Maryland Theatrical Tax Credit will give us a helping hand in getting the industry back on track by making up some of the union man hours we lost during the pandemic. Most of our full-time staff has been laid off and hundreds of skilled union stagehands and theatre staff who make their living off of live entertainment have been out of work for 10 months and have a long road ahead to recover.

Each production, under this incentive, would create 10,000+ union man hours in a time of year that our venues are traditionally vacant; that’s stagehands, musicians, and wardrobe/ hair union laborers now be working year round. In 2019 alone the Hippodrome Theatre generated over \$29.7 million dollars in economic impact to the state of Maryland. When Blockbusters like THE LION KING sell-out in Maryland, it alone brings an additional \$19 million in economic impact over 4 weeks.

Please support this crucial bill, especially during these difficult times, and in doing so support the economy, union-workers, and two amazing Broadway Touring producing companies in our state.

Sincerely,

Ron Legler
President
France-Merrick Performing Arts Center