

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 14, 2021

Testimony in Favor of SB0323
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 323. This bill would create the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant (MACC) program to be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The MACC would be funded by a mandatory appropriation of \$3 million dollars and would distribute capital funding among our smaller arts organizations with operating budgets less than \$3 million dollars.

There is no question that arts organizations across Maryland play a vital cultural and economic role: annually, 9.2 million Marylanders enjoy arts events¹ and Maryland State Arts Council grantees generate a total economic impact of \$1.3 billion and create over 16,000 full-time equivalent jobs². However, many of these same organizations focus their limited funding on impactful programming and community engagement, leaving precious little money for desperately needed capital improvements.

This Committee is no stranger to the needs of the arts organizations that bring so much light to our communities. In my own District, our Shakespeare company is in desperate need of staff bathrooms, Maryland Hall is midway through transforming a high school into the premiere arts center of our County, and a half dozen smaller organizations are desperate to repair leaky roofs, stand up new classrooms, and become ADA compliant. These same stories play out across Maryland. This bill would give organizations across the State the opportunity, via a committed grant fund, to receive capital funding so they can continue to make their beneficial social, cultural, and economic impact in our communities.

These budget pressures on nonprofit organizations have only been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we hopefully begin to regain normalcy in the coming months, many of our arts

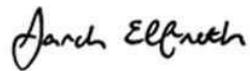
¹ Maryland Citizens for the Arts 2017 Annual Report

² Maryland State Arts Council 2019 Annual Report

organizations will yet again have to make the difficult decision of fulfilling their capital needs or supporting their ever-important programming. SB 323 provides this vital support.

You will find testimony from Maryland Citizens for the Arts as well as arts organizations from across the State in your packet. Once again I ask for your support of Senate Bill 323 so we can provide the support that these arts organizations need.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Elfreth".

Sarah Elfreth