



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

February 14, 2022

Re: House Bill 641-2022 (Income Tax -Theatrical Production Tax Credit)

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary:

I am in full support of the Theatrical Production Tax Credit, House Bill 641-2022. 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 in the United States 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, public health efforts, and fear of contracting the coronavirus have left live entertainment venues and live shows with reduced revenue opportunity and no solid timeline of a return to business as normal. This large scale, long term shut down extended 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 is just getting back to work, and hundreds of skilled union stagehands and theatre staff who make their living off of live entertainment are getting back to partial work after a 19 month forced hiatus. Passing the Theatrical Tax Credit this session will shorten our venues and union skilled labor force long road to recovery.

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 HAMILTON 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 right here in our beautiful state of Maryland.

With appreciation,

Ron Legler
President

12 North Eutaw Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201