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March 5, 2024

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Maryland Humanities excited to support HB1066: African American Heritage Preservation Grant Fund.

This bill will alter the uses of the African American Heritage Preservation Grant Fund to include grants to an African American heritage organization to fund the organization's operations and activities.

Maryland Humanities deeply understands the need for operational and programmatic support for organizations in Maryland providing important humanities work in their communities. We also recognize that historically the preservation and interpretation of African American history has been underfunded, undervalued, and pushed to the margins.

At Maryland Humanities we know Black history is Maryland history. Adjusting the purpose of the grant in this way can help address this historical marginalization and will support the growth and capacity of African American cultural sites throughout Maryland. The funding to support programs and operations would be vital to interpreting Maryland's dynamic and under-told Black American history while accelerating public engagement through the state's heritage tourism economy.

Maryland's Black history is central to Maryland's history and we look forward to seeing the ways in which the interpretation, understanding, and preservation of that history can grow through this adjustment in the grant fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsey Baker".

Chief Executive Officer
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