

BEN BARNES
Legislative District 21
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties

—
Chair
Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Greetings Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

House Bill 688 - Maryland Historical Trust - Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program - Funding adds an annual non-mandated fund to the budget via the Museum Historical Trust (MHT) to support the State's nearly 300 museums through the Museum Assistance Program.

Since the state legislature created the Museum Assistance Program in 1990, the Program has been overwhelmingly popular. Between 1991 and 2011, the Maryland Assistance Program has supported 125 museums, enabling them to provide educational services to more than 600,000 Maryland school children in museums and through classroom programs. Demand for the program has held steady at two to four times the available funding.

HB 688 annually appropriates \$5,000,000 to history museums which are ineligible for most Maryland State Arts Council grant programs. The passage of HB 688 will allow for the Museum Assistance Program to address the current lack salaries for staff (who are vital to the planning, education and development of the state's historical and cultural museums) and fund grants for disaster planning.

We must support our historical museums to ensure the preservation of our past. Returning the Museum Assistance Program to the Maryland Historical Trust provides the simplest solution to the challenge of supporting Maryland's museums. I ask for a favorable report on HB 688.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Barnes", written in a cursive style.

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
District 21