

January 6, 2024

Maryland General Assembly
Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senators:

With this testimony, as the Board Chair of the all-volunteer Maryland Museums Association, Inc., I seek to proclaim the organization's support for SB0596 and the State of Maryland's investment in the Marilyn Hatza Memorial SHINE grantmaking initiative.

Hatza SHINE Grants have been a game changer for Maryland's cultural organizations. It is a rare, and severely needed, source of operating funds for small and mid-sized non-profits. Many may not qualify for funding from the Maryland State Arts Council, Maryland Historical Trust, and/or Maryland Heritage Areas Authority – and those project-based grants do not address what cultural institutions need most – reliable financial support for mission-driven work in the face of increased need and increased costs.

Moreover, Maryland Humanities is a leading statewide organization in transparency, equity, and meaningful engagement with all Marylanders. With their administration of the funds, Hatza SHINE Grants are getting directly into the hands of some of the most interesting, diverse, and engaged cultural groups. If Maryland Humanities can secure funding for FY25, they will continue to provide general operating support funding, awarding at least \$950,000 in grants, with a minimum award amount of \$10,000 – and what a difference that \$10,000 makes.

For example, as a Hatza SHINE Grant recipient, Maryland Museums Association, Inc., will be able to offer scholarships to Marylanders to the American Association of Museums and the Association of African American Museums when both national organizations host their annual conferences here in Maryland later this year. Even with the conferences being in Maryland this year, the cost of attending is prohibitive to smaller organizations, and we want Marylanders to benefit and shine at these educational conferences in our very own state.

It is the hope of the Maryland Museums Association, Inc. that you include the Hatza SHINE Grant funding in the FY25 budget and support all efforts to secure funding in the future.

Sincerely,

Meagan Baco, Board Chair
Maryland Museums Association, Inc.
www.mdmuseums.org