



*Written testimony for Maryland Historical Trust – Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program-Funding (HB0688)*

March 25, 2024

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

Dear Senators,

Please accept this letter as written testimony in support of an \$5M appropriation in FY 2025 for the Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program (MAP) at the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) as recommended in House Bill 0688.

We strongly support the House amendment to the bill with removes language in the original legislation excluding beneficiaries of Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) grants from applying to the MAP program. Current appropriations for MSAC operating grants are over triple that being requested for MAP. Many historical museums are multidisciplinary and MSAC offers several grant programs, such as recent COVID relief and the Arts Capital Grant program, which have sometimes been made available to history museums. Equitable funding strategies for both MAP and MSAC grants could be determined through a funding formula or other means aside from an exclusion mandated by law. We believe that state agencies should be empowered to, and typically do, develop their own eligibility criteria that reflects the mission and intent of the funding opportunity.

The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) is very grateful to both Chair Ben Barnes and Chair Guy Guzzone for advancing this legislation through their chambers and their broad support of history museums in our state. Maryland has the opportunity to be a national leader in advancing inclusive, accurate, and empowering opportunities to engage with history. Our network of history museums is a critical part of the necessary work to bolster our larger cultural infrastructure in Maryland, but we need the State of Maryland's support to continue our innovation and public service, leaving no history behind. This is especially needed as we approach the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026. Through the reestablishment of MAP, Maryland will be well poised to celebrate its diverse and important role in our national story.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'David Belew' with a long, sweeping underline.

David Belew  
Vice President of External Affairs