

MCHC Supportive Testimony of HB0688.pdf

Uploaded by: David Belew

Position: FAV



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'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Belew
Vice President of External Affairs

HB 688 - SUPP -B&T 2nd - March 26 Museum Assistanc

Uploaded by: Henry Bogdan

Position: FAV



March 26, 2024

Testimony on House Bill 688

**Maryland Historical Trust - Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program – Funding
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is the only association advocating for the 40,000 nonprofit organizations in Maryland. With our nearly 2,000 members, we advocate for greater quality of life and equity. Maryland Nonprofits urges a favorable report on House Bill 688 to fund the Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program at the Maryland Historical Trust.

The over 450 nonprofit museums in Maryland are not merely repositories of history; they are vibrant community centers that foster education, understanding, and inclusivity. By supporting SB 688, we seize a pivotal opportunity to enhance the operational capacity of Maryland’s historical and cultural museums, many of which are grappling with financial vulnerabilities exacerbated by the recent pandemic.

The proposed \$5 million allocation for the Museum Assistance Program (MAP) in the FY 2025 operating budget is a strategic investment in our shared cultural infrastructure. This funding will empower museums to offer competitive wages, thereby attracting and retaining top talent; implement necessary upgrades to facilities ensuring the preservation of invaluable collections; expand outreach initiatives to engage diverse community voices; and innovate programming that brings Maryland’s rich history to life for all its residents.

As passed by the House of Delegates, House Bill 688 differs from Senate Bill 616 that you have already approved. House Bill 688 includes a provision that would allow otherwise eligible institutions that also receive operating assistance from the Maryland State Arts Council, to benefit from this new source of support. **We strongly endorse that change and urge you to retain it in acting on House Bill 688.**

Groups that would qualify It would be a shame if MAP recipients could not benefit from the Arts Capital Grant program, some of their COVID relief funds, and other opportunities that have more recently been available to historical organizations as well. We believe that state agencies would be able to refine their own eligibility criteria in a more flexible way as opposed to having a mandate in the law.

The importance of this funding cannot be overstated at a time when access to comprehensive and inclusive historical education is under threat. As we approach the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, our museums must be equipped to share the multifaceted stories of our state and nation, promoting understanding and dialogue across communities.



Maryland Nonprofits urges you to recognize the essential role that museums play in our society by supporting House Bill 688. By doing so, we can provide these institutions with the stability needed to thrive and continue their mission of education and preservation.



30 YEARS STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS FOR GREATER QUALITY OF LIFE AND EQUITY



mma-hb0688-fav-3-25-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Meagan Baco

Position: FAV



Maryland Museums Association
919 W 34th Street, PO Box 4715
Baltimore, MD 21211

**Written Testimony for Maryland Historical Trust:
Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program Funding (HB0688)**

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

March 25, 2024

Dear Senators,

Please accept this letter as written testimony in support of a minimum \$5M appropriation in FY2025 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 which removes language in the original legislation excluding beneficiaries of Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) grants from applying to the MAP program.

Notwithstanding that MAP has gone unfunded for over 10 years, during the pandemic, Maryland museums would not have been able to access COVID relief funds through MSAC had they also been current MAP grantees. This example highlights the potentially detrimental impact to our cultural institutions of keeping these grant programs exclusive of each other.

Additionally, state agencies like MSAC and MHT are empowered to create equitable funding formulas, and develop eligibility and award criteria based on each agency's expertise in the field and the needs of their stakeholders — without an exclusion mandated by law.

Funding MAP at a significant level this Session is an opportunity to provide support at a critical time in preparations for America250 (2026) and Maryland400 (2034) when all eyes will be on Maryland museums to deliver accurate and engaging interpretive experiences to residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

Meagan Baco, Board Chair
Maryland Museums Association, Inc.