



**Annapolis Symphony Orchestra**  
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TESTIMONY OF  
ANNAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
IN SUPPORT OF

HB 701 On behalf of the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra please accept our written testimony in support of Bill HB 701 "Consumer Protection - Sale and Resale of Tickets"

The Annapolis Symphony Orchestra has experienced significant and negative impacts from third-party ticket sales. As recently as November and December of 2023, our organization and our patrons encountered significant issues from third-party ticket sales. Although these were not the first such instances we encountered, the grave concerns wrought by third-party ticket sales were markedly increased from previous concerts and involved much higher levels of financial distress for ticket purchasers. Not only are third-party ticket vendors more aggressive than ever, some are disreputable, and the industry is growing faster than ever.

Annapolis Symphony Orchestra sells tickets to our performances only through our website or over the phone at our office. We use proprietary software and do not share ticketing with other businesses or organizations. To be clear, we have never authorized ticket sales through a third-party provider.

Our recent concerts, especially Holiday Pops, saw multiple ticket holders calling to confirm performance details, only to discover that we did not have evidence of their ticket purchase in our system. Their names, phone numbers or emails weren't in our system, their seats didn't match our seating charts, and we had no confirmation of their purchase whatsoever. Further, some patrons paid more than five times face value for tickets even though tickets were directly available at face value on our website.

Even when a patron has a typical customer service issue, such as needing reprinted tickets, I can do little to assist them if they purchased tickets from a third-party site. In order to ensure this patron continues to attend and support ASO events, we have chosen to offer comp tickets without being assured that we received revenue in the first place.

The impact on our organization is significant and damaging in terms of reputation and trust among our patrons. As a nonprofit arts organization, every dollar of income counts. We try to balance raising revenue with affordability and value. When a third-party charges an excessive price for our tickets, with high fees, this negatively impacts the perceived value of our performance. Those inflated ticket prices do not benefit the organization. These sites often use the exact title of our concerts and appear to be legitimate business partners. Their advertisements are misleading at best and dishonest at worst.

Dishonest pricing practices hinder the community's access to the arts. Third-party ticket vendors impact our reputation as a community-based organization that exists to serve lovers of music and our greater community in impactful and essential ways. When ticket purchasers encounter excessive prices, exorbitant fees, counterfeit websites, and other inconveniences, they may never return.

The ASO requests a favorable report on HB 701.

#### About the ASO

The Annapolis Symphony Orchestra is a 501C3 not-for-profit organization headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland. For 62 years, the ASO has brought the highest caliber musicianship and classical and orchestral music programming to our state's capital and Anne Arundel County. Not only do we present concerts, but we also are the host organization for the Annapolis Symphony Academy, a music school for children ages 4 to college. Fifty per cent of our Academy students come from Title I schools and under-resourced communities. We invest significantly in our community outreach efforts and work hard to bring music to schools, hospitals, addiction recovery centers, museums, and senior living facilities across the region.