



Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic (TAMA)

www.teachingartists.org

info@teachingartist.org

PO Box 212, Riverdale, MD 20738

Honorable Members of the Senate:

We are writing to express our full support for SB 764, the Arts Incubator Workgroup, a crucial initiative to sustain and invest in our creative arts economy. As artists ourselves, we know that the arts are an essential cultural asset and a significant contributor to the economic vitality of our state. Teaching Artists, in particular, are dynamic and vibrant arts professionals who specialize in leading arts-learning and making experiences in educational and community settings, including schools, arts organizations, community centers, parks, libraries, wellness centers, detention centers, businesses, and other similar institutions.

We represent the Maryland chapter of the Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic (TAMA). TAMA is the only local agency supporting, empowering, and advocating for professional Teaching Artists. We serve the region as a model and resource for mid-Atlantic stakeholders who value and recognize Teaching Artists as influential paid professionals of an equitable and vibrant arts ecosystem. Unlike arts organizations with physical locations, most Teaching Artists do not operate from a fixed location and workplace, essentially, we are invisible. Yet, we work at the intersection of arts, education, and community, making our contributions all the more vital.

In Maryland, the arts sector is a formidable economic engine. For instance, the state's artists and cultural organizations generate \$837 million in economic activity annually, support eight thousand jobs, and return \$19.6 million in local and state tax revenues, as per the Maryland Department of Commerce FY2022 report. These figures underscore the undeniable impact of the arts on our economy. Teaching Artists leverage their artistic skills and expertise to create arts education and lifelong creative learning programs that grow meaningful connections, foster empathy and understanding, promote healing, address societal challenges, and facilitate personal growth and development. We empower individuals and communities to unlock their full potential to shape, change, create, and transform individuals, local communities, our nation, and the world for the better.

Despite these substantial contributions, artists face significant economic hardships. Teaching Artists, in particular, have to deal with the challenges of straddling the dual role of education and the arts. Moreover, traditional business sector policies tend to overlook artists altogether, leaving Teaching Artists vulnerable to exploitation. The majority of Teaching Artists work without a labor union. Primarily hired as part-time or independent contractors, often paid by the hour or the length of service, we lack traditional benefits, such as healthcare contributions, pensions, sick leave, and job security. SB764 proposes an essential framework for addressing these economic challenges. It aims to further study the needs of artists and provide them with the support they need.

As small businesses, artists and Teaching Artists must be recognized and valued as paid professionals in Maryland. TAMA seeks to collaborate with legislators to ensure that policies that overlook our vital contributions to our communities receive urgent attention.

Please consider the profound impact your support of SB 764 could have on the lives of artists and the cultural wealth of Maryland. The artist incubator workgroup is a valuable initiative that must include input from Teaching Artists. We urge the Governor to appoint a Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic member as the artist-educator representative in this important initiative. We believe that Teaching Artists must actively participate in this workgroup to ensure that art-learning and art-making are at the heart of Maryland's future, enhancing the state's vibrancy and continued growth and transformation. Therefore, we urge you to vote YES for SB 764, ensuring our state remains a nurturing ground for the arts.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this pivotal issue.

Signed,



Jennifer Ridgway, President



Khaleshia Thorpe-Price, Maryland Director

Across the state, 49 individual Teaching Artists and small businesses have pledged their support for HB1451:

In Anne Arundel

David Kenneth Hildebrand
David & Ginger Hildebrand
Annapolis, MD

In Baltimore City

Christina Delgado
Tola's Room
Baltimore, MD

Christine Susan DeJuliis
Baltimore, MD

Michael Lamason
Black Cherry Puppet Theater
Baltimore, MD

Katherine Lyons
Baltimore, MD

Kathleen Kelly MacMillan
Stories By Hand with Kathy
MacMillan
Baltimore, MD

Joanne Margolius
Magical Experiences Arts
Company
Baltimore, MD

Anna Sellheim
Refugee Youth Project
Baltimore, MD

**BLACK CHERRY
PUPPET THEATER**



In Baltimore County

Lisa Anderson
Milkshake Music LLC
Baltimore, MD

Deborah Rachel Kleinmann
Baltimore, MD

Valerie Leonhart Smalkin
Small Kin Music/Silly Goose & Val
Baltimore, MD



In Calvert County

Dr. Candace Campbell
Peripatetic Productions
Chesapeake Beach, MD

In Charles County

Thomas Jefferson Howell
STEAM, a 501(c)3 nonprofit
La Plata, MD

Monique Walker
Waldorf, MD

In Frederick County

Tricia L Fegley
Myersville, MD

Christine Galante
Frederick, MD

Jeffrey Warren Harrison
Sunnyland Music & Multicultural Arts
Emmitsburg, MD

Andrea McCluskey
Frederick, MD

In Howard County

Loretta Jean Foster
Clay Happenings Again
Columbia, MD

In Montgomery County

Kathryn Aboudou
Takoma Park, MD

Steven L. Barker
Gaithersburg, MD

Noa Baum
Silver Spring, MD

Liliane Blom
Liliane Blom Art Studio
Rockville, MD

J. Jordan Bruns
Art Clinic at Glen Echo Park
Glen Echo, MD

Paula Marie Cleggett
Rockville, MD

Roberta M. Gasbarre
Silver Spring, MD

Mary Gresock
Silver Spring, MD

Arturo Ho
Silver Spring, MD

Jamie Iwugo
Takoma Park, MD

Denise M. Jones
Brass Ring Company
Takoma Park, MD

Renee Sandell
ForThCo Vision LLC
Bethesda, MD

Annetta Dexter Sawyer
Silver Spring, MD

Deborah Sternberg
Germantown, MD

Laura Sturza
Laura Sturza, Writer/Teacher
Rockville, MD

Khaleshia Thorpe-Price
Dramatic Play LLC
Gaithersburg, MD

Michele A. Valeri
Dinorock Productions
Silver Spring, MD

Marcie Wolf-Hubbard
Silver Spring, MD



In Prince George's County

Eileen C. Cave
Hyattsville Community Arts
Alliance
Hyattsville, MD

Saige Colbert
A D4ME Production LLC
Mount Rainier, MD

Henry Harris
Strategic Music Partnerships
Fort Washington, MD

LaShawnte' Holloman-Clay
Sculpted Clay Productions LLC
Upper Marlboro, MD

Don Junious Johns
DMV Music Academy
Hyattsville, MD

Alicia Oliver-Krueger
InterAct Story Theatre Education
Association
Glenn Dale, MD

Jennifer Lynn Ridgway
Yard Dramas LLC
Hyattsville, MD

Melissa Richardson
Brentwood, MD

Alice Lorraine Robinson
Fort Washington, MD

Laura Catherine Schandelmeier
Dance Box Theater
Brentwood, MD



In Washington County

Dawn K. Hoffman
Dawn Arts Design
Hagerstown, MD

In Wicomico County

Stephen Philip Harvey
Hidden Cinema Records LLC
Salisbury, MD