

Honorable Members of the House Appropriations Committee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0961
Commissioned Public Art - Artist Rights

Dear Honorable Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

As a practicing public artist in Baltimore City, I urge you to support HB0961. My name is Jaz Erenberg, and I make a living painting murals throughout Baltimore. I also serve as Chair of the Baltimore Public Art Commission and Co-Executive Director of BRUSH Mural Fest. Given my roles, I have a deep investment in advocating for the rights of public artists.

Currently, in order to install a work of public art commissioned by the city or placed on public property, an artist must sign away both their VARA rights and the copyright to their work. In my communities, this practice is widely viewed as predatory and exploitative. If I have done my job correctly, it will also make it increasingly difficult for the city to collaborate with artists in the future.

Supporting this bill is essential for several reasons:

- It upholds the rights of artists and ensures they retain control over their work.
- It strengthens Baltimore's creative economy by fostering fair and ethical partnerships.
- It preserves the integrity of public art, benefiting both artists and the communities that engage with it.

Public art is a vital part of our city's cultural fabric, enriching neighborhoods and giving voice to the people who live there. I urge you to vote in favor of HB0961 to protect artists and ensure a more equitable creative landscape in Baltimore.

Sincerely,

Jaz Erenberg

Public Artist, Chair of the Baltimore Public Art Commission, Co-Executive Director of BRUSH Mural Fest

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