



February 14, 2025

To: House Appropriations Committee

RE: HB0961 Assigned to House Appropriations Committee

I am writing in support of the Bill HB0916, which is intended to provide Artist's Rights Protection as well as their reputation. The goal of this bill is to protect the public's interest in ensuring that the investment and legacy of a work of art is not lost or compromised.

I have created public art locally and nationally for over 35 years and feel strongly that it is important to our culture. It enriches our lives and does a myriad of good including the enhancement of the vibrancy in our cities and neighborhoods and supports economic growth. Public art contributes to the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Two reasons for this are the landmarks and identity public art has created for communities. Also, keep in mind that public art has been commissioned across Maryland through multiple Federal, State, and local public art programs for placemaking and creating legacies.

HB0961 is being introduced because some public art in Maryland has been altered without artists' permission in violation of their rights. When artists are coerced to waive their federal VARA (Visual Artist Rights Act of 1990) and copyright protections in contracts for commissioned works, the integrity of the art is no longer protected which hurts the artist and the public.

This legislation will establish that the State of Maryland respects artists' rights and the public interest in the preservation of public art. It is limited in scope, since it is only enforceable with entities in which State funds are involved. However, the legislation will apply to contracts with artists by entities that receive state funding. Additionally, the legislation also recognizes that there may be unforeseeable conditions where this legislation may not be applicable and so provides for review by the Attorney General with guidance as needed from those with knowledge and expertise in public art through MSAC.

Thank you are your attention. As an artist who has spent her professional life since 1979 in Maryland, please pass this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,
Jann Rosen-Queralt
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