

Honorable Members of the House Appropriations Committee

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

My name is Linda DePalma. I am an artist living for over 40 years in Bolton Hill 21217 and vote in all elections. Please support **HB0961**. I am 100% in favor and support of this bill.

As an artist who has been fortunate enough to receive a number of public art commissions in the regional area, this is a poignant issue for me.

Why is public art important?

Public artworks, commissioned by the State, often involve artists collaborating with local governments, architects and engineers. This is a challenging process, however, due to this collaboration, a sense of place with historical and meaningful implications develops. Artworks are beloved by the communities where they are sited. A public artwork becomes an important identifier, a landmark, for State constituents and their communities. What is the intrinsic value of this artwork? A connection to art can enhance emotional, physical and mental health. Viewing art can trigger those “feel good hormones.” It can actually create joy!

Public art acts as an economic engine, attracting visitors, who in turn patronize other businesses in the region. It creates jobs for fabricators and installers, and provides funds to purchase materials. It acknowledges the importance of promoting art in a community so that the quality of life can be uplifted. Works can become a symbol or a document of the culture. Since public art is free and available to ANYONE, it becomes a catalyst for social interaction. It is accessible to all. People come together and connect to each other. It is a legacy document of the culture and can address social issues sparking conversation.

Waiving rights...

Artists should not be asked to waive their copyright or other protection rights. Since this is not a lucrative calling for most artists, their integrity and intellectual ownership is of utmost importance. Insuring protection of the artist’s original intent or any action to compromise the work is in the best public interests.

I have had a personal experience with this issue. I was a finalist for a federally funded sculptural relief and was asked to waive my Integrity rights. I did not agree to that and although all the comments about the design were all positive, I did not receive the commission.

Personally, I *love* the idea of community being pleasantly surprised when they come upon a sculpture – a sense of embracing both pride and ownership of sculpture in the public realm emerges. The viewer is uplifted and feels like they got a special gift. Among my works is an expansive gate at the Maryland Public Health Laboratory in East Baltimore, an entry gate to the nature-walk at Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, MD and three sculptural works (a gate, canopy and bench) at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, MD. In addition, I received an Art-in-Transit commission through the Purple Line, Maryland Transit Systems, to be completed in 2025 for the Riggs Road station in Washington DC.

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Thank you for your time and consideration of **HB0961**.

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