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Joint Committee on Ending  
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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 310 \* Maryland Arts Capital Program**  
January 20, 2021 at 1:30 PM  
Appropriations Committee

**What this bill does**

This bill creates the Maryland Arts Capital Program (MAC), a competitive grant program for arts institutions in Maryland administered by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). It will ensure a more meritocratic process for awarding increasingly scarce capital dollars to these important institutions in our state. This bill will allocate \$3 million to the program every year from FY2023 - FY2028.

Medium and small arts organizations can be awarded up to \$1,000,000 for a project that would expand, renovate, or repair their facilities. Those who are awarded will have to match at least 25% of the award.

**Why this bill matters**

The Maryland arts sector is a robust community of arts organizations and independent artists that invest their time, energy, and talent in all corners of the state. Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.5 billion to the local and state economy, engage over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide over \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Arts organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

Many arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements and lobbying efforts. Instead, these organizations make the choice to spend on programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are invested on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important community engagement initiatives. These organizations often need access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on our arts organizations - most institutions have been closed since March, or for at least the majority of the days since March. The economic challenges have been significant and widespread. In a recent study utilizing data from the MD Department of Commerce and the MSAC, the art sector's total economic loss to

date caused by the pandemic has been over \$135 million. Additionally, the industry has suffered a loss of almost \$30 million in earned revenue and the forced loss of over 21,000 arts-related jobs (many of whom were contractually-hired artists and creative workers). These figures project a story of long-term financial challenges and a recovery that necessitates action that will help the arts sector not only get back on its feet but regain its status as one of the strongest economic sectors in our state.

**Why should you vote for this bill**

We face increasingly tight capital budgets and our institutions are competing for fewer and fewer capital dollars. These dollars should go to organizations that need them, not just those who are most politically connected. We should ensure that there is dedicated funding each year for small and mid-size arts organizations who can work through a known and transparent process to access grant dollars. In every region of Maryland we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.