

BALTIMORE LOCAL No.19

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO-CLC



January 25, 2021

Michael Mixer
Business Agent
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I.A.T.S.E. Local #19
P.O. Box 50098
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Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee
 3 West
 Miller Senate Office Building
 Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Guzzone and Senate Committee Members:

I write in these devastating times to enthusiastically support the proposed Theatrical Production Tax Credit (Senate Bill OI71). Much has changed in the past year and none of was positive for our union workers. The ongoing pandemic has had a disastrous impact on the entertainment industry, and Local 19 has not been spared. Without theater, concerts, and conventions, almost every stagehand has been out of work and totally unemployed since March 2020. This tax credit could help to provide much needed future work opportunities for Local 19 stagehands.

As the proud Business Agent of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local # 19 in Baltimore, Maryland, I represent a diverse group of skilled men and women who perform technical work backstage in theaters and at other related venues throughout Maryland.

Not having these types of tax credits available in Maryland has negatively affected the amount of work available to our union members. Theatrical production companies based in Maryland, such as Troika and Networks, have made business decisions to take their theatrical production and technical rehearsal work out of state to jurisdictions where tax credits are available. This type of work employs up to 100 members of I.A.T.S.E. on average. These decisions to leave the state to do business out of state may make economic sense from the perspective of the production companies. Offering the same tax credits in Maryland would encourage theatrical production companies to do more business in Maryland. This in turn would create more work for the hard-working men and women of Local #19, and mean more money recycled into the local economy.

One of Local #19's largest employers and most proactive business partners is the management team from Broadway Across America that manages The Hippodrome Theatre at The France-Merrick Performing Arts Center. Led by President, Ron Legler, the Hippodrome management is aggressive in trying to keep the theatre as busy as possible to keep all employees in the theater working year-round. Over the past 10 years, however, there has been almost no work at the Hippodrome in the summer months, which puts a large group of our membership on unemployment or having to find part-time work elsewhere until the Hippodrome reopens in the fall. Most of the theatrical production and technical rehearsal work that Ron is working to bring the Hippodrome, by supporting these tax credits, takes place in these summer months.

It would be an understatement to say that attracting this work, and keeping these dollars in state during these slow months, would have great economic benefits for the membership of I.A.T.S.E. Local #19. I respectfully request that your committee give this bill a favorable recommendation to the General Assembly.

Michael Mixer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Mixer', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Business Agent
Union Steward
I.A.T.S.E. Local #19**