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Budget and Taxation Committee

Capital Budget Subcommittee

Health and Human Services Subcommittee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill 577

Bill Title: Economic Development - Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

Hearing Date: February 23, 2021 – Finance

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

I write to you today in support of SB 577. Open Works has quickly grown into a national leader in the maker movement, setting new precedents on the ability for makerspaces to deliver economic impact; diversifying a field that has been historically unrepresentative of minorities and women; and delivering high-quality educational programming in fabrication, design, and entrepreneurship to learners of all ages. In a field without widely documented best practices, Open Works has developed a valuable set of operational competencies that can help other municipalities in Maryland derive similar economic and educational benefits from makerspaces.

The proposed legislation creates a non-lapsing fund to be administered by TEDCO that would support the dissemination of Open Works' best practices to other makerspaces and municipalities establishing makerspaces in the State of Maryland. This will help other new organizations increase their ability to deliver high-quality services to communities in need, quickly scale their audience, and produce sustainable, grassroots economic growth. Further, this bill will help ensure the financial viability of public-facing makerspaces in Maryland by providing operational support that can be leveraged for greater growth, productivity, and private fundraising. For these reasons, I encourage a favorable report on SB 577.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory V. McCray'.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator