



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 577 –
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – MAKERSPACE INITIATIVE
PILOT PROGRAM**

POSITION: SUPPORT

FEBRUARY 23, 2021

The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) is dedicated to economic growth through the fostering of an inclusive entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. TEDCO discovers, invests in, and helps build great Maryland based technology companies. Recognizing its importance to entrepreneurs in Baltimore, TEDCO has partnered with Open Works for the last several years. TEDCO has been pleased to support its entrepreneurship efforts by providing support and mentorship for Open Works' EnterpRISE Venture Competition – a pitch competition and business boot camp for early-stage businesses and start-ups that require access to advanced fabrication technologies to manufacture innovative prototypes and products.

Open Works has quickly grown into a national leader in the maker movement, delivering high-quality educational programming in fabrication, design, and entrepreneurship to learners of all ages. It offers access to innovative technologies and production tools that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive to many entrepreneurs. Coppin State University's Center for Strategic Ingepreneurship (CSI) conducted a comprehensive economic impact study on Open Works since its founding in 2016. It concluded that Open Works has created 252 direct and indirect jobs in Baltimore City and across the State; while demonstrating national leadership in diversity and inclusion indicators.

Senate Bill 577 creates a pilot program to award financial assistance to a local government or nonprofit who seek to establish or expand a makerspace in the State. The bill would enable Open Works to use its best practices and its valuable set of operational competencies to help other communities in Maryland derive similar economic and educational benefits from makerspaces. **For these reasons, TEDCO encourages a favorable report on Senate Bill 577.**