



## CARE BRAVELY

SB453 - Economic Development – Maryland Makerspace Initiative

Senate Finance Committee – February 15, 2022

Testimony of Marianne Navarro, Director, Community Development, LifeBridge Health

Position: **SUPPORT**

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**Background:** LifeBridge Health is the parent company of Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, Northwest Hospital, Carroll Hospital Center, and Grace Medical Center (formerly Bon Scours Hospital). LifeBridge Health, through its various subsidiaries, provides a broad range of health care services to residents of Baltimore City and surrounding counties. LifeBridge is unique a unique major healthcare institution in that it maintains a dedicated team solely focused on community development and social determinants of health, valuing educational outcomes, workforce development opportunities, and a strong businesses environment as paths to better health and revitalization in the communities we serve.

**Hospital Role:** LifeBridge Health strongly believes that local communities across Baltimore and Maryland can derive benefits from operating and building makerspaces, especially as communities struggle to confront interlocking economic, educational, and health challenges triggered and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. When possible, LifeBridge Health seeks out local businesses to provide goods and services in both our public areas, such as cafes and gift shops, but also in other areas of our supply chain that meet our health care delivery needs. We partner with local schools to promote career exploration in the health sciences to build a workforce pipeline. Makerspaces could contribute to more opportunities to expose students and local businesses to makerspaces and also create a more predictable local supply chain for jurisdictions, schools, businesses, the general public, and health care providers, especially during challenging times like we have experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Early in the pandemic, LifeBridge Health mobilized PPE production to meet our needs for face shields, masks, and gowns while also utilizing local expertise for self-production knowledge, supplies, and equipment. We also purchased a small number of locally produced fabric masks from local makers.

The proposed Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program legislation creates a non-lapsing fund to be administered by TEDCO that would support the expansion and establishment of further makerspaces in the State of Maryland, significantly scaling the current impacts of Open Works' current location.

Constructing a makerspace network would immediately catapult Maryland, and the Baltimore region, into a national leadership role in cultivating an innovation economy and have profound implications on the next 25 years of economic growth, workforce development, STEM educational excellence, disaster preparedness, and startup activity. Further, creating a network of public makerspaces will scale additional operational efficiencies and funding opportunities for these vital spaces. These factors are important components in the ongoing health of the community, including those served by LifeBridge Health.

For all of the foregoing reasons, I urge you to **SUPPORT** a favorable vote on SB0453.

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