



NATION OF MAKERS

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Testimony by Dorothy Jones-Davis, PhD, Executive Director, Nation of Makers SB0453 - Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

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Nation of Makers is a national nonprofit, proudly located in Silver Spring, MD, that is committed to supporting America's maker organizations through community building, resource sharing, and advocacy.

In support of our mission, we are proud to partner with local maker organizations, such as Open Works, that are having a significant economic/social/cultural impact within their community, to create opportunities for all Americans to succeed through making where they live.

Open Works has quickly grown into a national leader in the maker movement, demonstrating the ability of makerspaces to deliver economic impact, diversifying a field that has seen historically low representation of ethnic and racial minorities and women, and delivering high-quality educational programming in fabrication, design, and entrepreneurship to learners of all ages and backgrounds in Maryland.

Additionally, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, makers responded across the country to fill critical supply shortages, producing and distributing over 37M units of medical supplies across the U.S. For example, Open Works, through its Makers Unite program, produced 28,270 face shields for over 100 local clients, from local hospitals to federal agencies.

As a leader of the national maker movement, I know that makerspaces are critical, not only in emergencies, but also because they deliver just-in-time, accessible community-based education and training that results in new jobs, new businesses, and new avenues for economic and community prosperity.

The proposed legislation creates a non-lapsing fund to be administered by TEDCO that would support the establishment of a network of makerspaces in the State of Maryland.

Creating a network of five makerspaces across the state of Maryland could

- produce \$45M in annual economic impact, \$2.25M in annual tax revenues, and 600 jobs through direct employment and startup business creation.
- address the diverse workforce needs of manufacturers and tech companies across the state

- educate 6,700 adults and 850 youth annually, and
- create a civil manufacturing reserve to provide supply chain resilience in case of natural disaster, terror attack, or pandemic.

As the Executive Director of Nation of Makers and citizen of Silver Spring, I can say that I am very excited for the promise of Senate Bill 453 and the positive economic impact it will have on the entire state. Constructing a makerspace network would immediately catapult Maryland 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. For these reasons, I encourage a favorable vote on SB453. Thank you for your time.