

**Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program**  
**Statement of Support from Michael Prebil, workforce policy analyst at New America**  
**Bill # SB0453: Economic Development – Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program**  
**House Ways and Means Committee Hearing date: March 30th, 2022, 1 PM**

Good afternoon—thank you for the opportunity to add my voice in support of SB0453 implementing the Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program.

In my work as a workforce development policy analyst with the nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank New America, I have studied and supported education and training initiatives across a wide array of occupations. Recent federal and state investments in education and training have given rise to a variety of program options that support learners in all stages of their career—from secondary school students to college graduates to incumbent workers and career-changers.

Federal investments in these career pathways initiatives are likely to continue, and states that are positioned to make best use of these investments will do the most to help their students. An enormous challenge facing career pathways programs are needs for space and physical capital to serve the needs of different occupations. Makerspaces such as Open Works, located in my neighborhood, provide invaluable help in addressing this challenge, by providing the space, equipment, and technology to train for in-demand occupations in construction, manufacturing, technology, and health care. Makerspaces also support economic development goals by providing space for business development and prototyping, and galvanize the curiosity of young learners.

I strongly believe other communities in Maryland can derive similar benefits by building makerspaces, especially as communities struggle to dig out of the interlocking economic, educational, and health crises triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, creating a network of public makerspaces will scale additional operational efficiencies and funding opportunities. The proposed 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. Creating a network of five locations would have the following impacts:

**Economic Impact**

- In 2019, state and local tax revenues generated by Open Works and associated businesses topped \$450,000.
- Five locations will produce \$45M in annual economic impact, \$2.25M in annual tax revenues, and 600 jobs through direct employment and startup creation.

**Educational Impact**

- In 2019, Open Works enrolled 1,339 adults and 171 youth in technical education classes.
- 5 locations could educate 6,700 adults and 850 youth annually.

**Emergency Resilience**

- Based on Open Works' experience with Makers Unite, we could organize a civil manufacturing reserve to provide supply chain resilience in case of natural disaster, terror attack, or pandemic.

**Workforce Development**

- In late 2021, Open Works was awarded \$223,000 from the City of Baltimore to run a two-year apprenticeship program for industrial sewing machine operators.
- 5 locations will provide the scale to address the diverse workforce needs of

manufacturers and tech companies across the state and better compete with Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., and Virginia.

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.

Thank you again for the opportunity to add my voice in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

-- Michael Prebil

Policy Analyst, Center on Education & Labor at New America