

In Support of HB0688 concerning the *Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program- Funding*

Maryland General Assembly
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Honorable Delegates,

In my capacity as the director of a Maryland nonprofit organization and speaking on behalf of our Board of Directors, I wish to present testimony in favor of House Bill 0688, which pertains to funding for the Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program.

Allow me to provide insight from the perspective of a longstanding tourist attraction originating in Frederick County over three decades ago. Similar to numerous small museums, our organization thrives due to the dedication of our volunteers. We diligently preserve historic properties, buildings, and equipment that played pivotal roles in the industrial history and development of Central Maryland. Annually, we welcome over 20,000 visitors; however, we are compelled to reduce our operating hours and accessibility as we strive to manage our resources judiciously.

Like our counterparts in the historical preservation field, we aspire to position ourselves as a premier visitor destination within Maryland. Despite our volunteers' commendable efforts in preserving and showcasing artifacts, they encounter challenges in modernizing our facilities to meet the evolving expectations of 21st-century tourists.

Enhancing educational exhibits, strategic planning, design upgrades, and ensuring accessibility pose significant hurdles for many museums. The support provided by the Maryland Historical Trust directly addresses these challenges, fostering impactful enhancements that expand our capacity to welcome visitors to our state. Resources available to small museums dedicated to promoting Maryland's rich heritage remain scarce, underscoring the importance of advocating for this bill.

I urge you to lend your support to House Bill 0688, recognizing its vital role in bolstering Maryland's cultural landscape and ensuring the continued success of institutions like ours in preserving our shared history for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Kovalcik



Director
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