



**March 11, 2021**

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL BILL 21-0022R**

Thank you for your consideration of Baltimore City Council Bill 21-0022R. This resolution requests that \$1 million in COVID relief funding be distributed to Baltimore City Artists.

In a 2015 study produced by the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts, the Baltimore arts economy helped drive over \$600 million in economic impact and provided over \$54 million in tax revenues. Independent artists are a key and necessary driver for the creative economy in Baltimore City and across Maryland. Furthermore, the city owes a great deal of tourism and economic stimulus from their collective work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on almost every artist in the city. Many have been unable to secure artistic work due to health and safety concerns and the shutdown of nearly all arts-related activities since March of 2020. Additionally, issues with accessing pandemic unemployment insurance have been challenging or impossible for artists as many are considered mixed-income earners or freelancers.

While the Maryland State Government has responded by providing \$12 for emergency arts relief over the past year— it is also the responsibility of local jurisdictions to help deliver targeted support to artists who represent a specific part of the workforce that has been devastated by the pandemic. This resolution is an essential step towards recognizing the economic suffering of artists in our city and the importance of investing and supporting our creative workforce.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on Baltimore City Council Bill 21-0022R.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Cohen  
Executive Director