Amy Reid

Testimony for Assisting Baltimore City Artists

I am an active Baltimore based musician, curator, sound and visual artist. The majority of my income is made from live performances and events. I know this is true for many other Baltimore creatives. We understand that being safe is imperative so we have all had to shift towards navigating virtual platforms or the complications involved in having a live event while following CDC safety protocols and City wide restrictions. In my experience, virtual opportunities are not consistent and do not generate any amount comparable to an in-person event. I was among the fortunate to receive unemployment benefits based on a non-art related part time job I held in 2019. Many of my colleagues were not so fortunate because the Maryland Unemployment Department was not set up for independent contractors at the beginning of the pandemic. Some have still not received support even after PUA was issued.

In July 2020, I lost my unemployment benefits due to a previous employer making a mistake within the payroll system. I was cut off from benefits and had to create a new claim. Because I do generate the majority of my income from music and art, I now fall under the PUA claims. Since January 2021, I have not received any updates and have not received any benefits. I believe this is true and applies to many other artists' situations living in Baltimore. Baltimore can do better to support the artists that live and breathe life into this city. We are a strong fabric that works towards building community and celebrates the rich culture of Baltimore. We deserve and demand financial support.