

CREATIVE SPACE ACT

An Act to grow and maintain space in cities and towns for the creative economy

Sponsored by Sen. Liz Miranda and Rep. Dan Cahill

MASSACHUSETTS IS THE 3RD MOST ARTS-VIBRANT STATE IN THE NATION. BUT WE ARE DISPLACING OUR ARTISTS.

Massachusetts is home to vast artistic talent and our communities benefit from our vibrant creative sector. In 2024, Massachusetts was recognized for the second consecutive year as the 3rd most arts-vibrant state in the nation. The creative economy in Massachusetts contributes \$28.6 billion in revenue, 4.1% of the Commonwealth's economy, and accounts for 135,000 jobs. Arts and culture animate our downtowns, communicate our stories, and cultivate belonging.

However, we are losing arts and cultural production spaces at an alarming rate. In the last ten years, we lost more than 100,000 square feet of cultural production space, studios, rehearsal space, and live music venues just in Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville. In the final months of 2024, more than 20 artists were displaced from Easthampton's Cottage Street Studios and others were impacted by the closure of Mill No. 5 in Lowell.

We can't afford to lose more creatives and maker spaces in Massachusetts. The Creative Space Act is a fiscally neutral, statewide policy proposal to keep artists in our communities, prevent further loss of creative maker spaces, and lay the groundwork for future production and exhibition spaces.

ABOUT THE CREATIVE SPACE ACT

The Creative Space Act uses the Affordable Housing Trust Fund model to address this problem. The Act establishes "creative space" and "presentation space" land restrictions to protect and develop new creative production and exhibition spaces in Massachusetts. These definitions encompass spaces that are primarily used for the creation, practice, presentation, and exhibition of art, culture and creative expression. This would include spaces that are primarily used for activities such as sketching, design, prototyping, writing, rehearsing, composing, and recording, as well as developing, expanding, and maintaining skills and competencies that support creativity.

The Creative Space Act also creates the option for municipalities to establish their own Municipal Creative Space Trust Funds to acquire, purchase, maintain, and hold onto creative maker space assets. The Trust Fund would be administered by a 5-person board of trustees, per municipality, and would include representation from members of the local creative community.

SUMMARY:

- Defines "creative space" and "presentation space" land restrictions in the Massachusetts General Laws as spaces where the primary uses are for the creation, practice, showcasing, presentation, and exhibition of art, culture and creative expression, and the primary users are artists, creative workers, or artisans.
- Gives cities and towns the option to establish Municipal Creative Space Trust Funds for the growth and maintenance of creative space and presentation spaces. Municipalities with a Trust Fund would form a 5-person board of trustees responsible for accepting and receiving property and funds; purchasing and retaining property; selling, leasing, exchanging or transferring property; managing or improving property; and other activities.
- Trustees will include representatives from the local creative community, such as the Local Cultural Council.
- Creative space restrictions can apply to live/work artist studio housing.
- This Act does not require funding.





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TAKE FOUR to support the Creative Space Act

1. ENDORSE THE CREATIVE SPACE ACT

Share your support for the Creative Space Act by becoming a public endorser. You can sign on as an individual, cultural organization, or both! By endorsing the bill, you make our coalition stronger and signal to elected officials that there is broad support for this policy. Endorse today by using the QR code or by emailing mcan@mass-creative.org.



Reminder: 501(c)(3) organizations are allowed to publicly endorse legislation! This will not violate your tax-exempt status.

2. ASK YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE AND STATE SENATOR TO CO-SPONSOR H.3587 AND S.2334

Contact your State Representative and State Senator and ask them to co-sponsor H.3587 and S.2334. Tell them why you support this legislation and how it would serve the creative community in your district.

Tip: don't get too concerned about sharing your message the perfect way. Legislators want to hear directly from their constituents and the important thing is letting them know why this issue matters to you.

3. EDUCATE YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE ABOUT THE CREATIVE SECTOR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Multiply your impact by encouraging 3 people in your network to also endorse the Creative Space Act and contact their elected officials. Consider educating your audience, co-workers, staff, or your board. Share this fact sheet or direct them to the MASSCreative Action Network's Take Action page.

4. KEEP UP THE ADVOCACY!

By taking the first three steps, you're taking meaningful action to support the Creative Space Act - but don't stop there! Watch for updates from MASSCreative about public hearings and other opportunities to unite your advocacy with the rest of the Creative Space Act coalition.

Contact Us

Questions? Connect with us by contacting mcan@mass-creative.org. Make sure to follow our social media channels for more advocacy updates.

www.mcan-ma.org
Instagram: @masscreative
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#ArtsAdvocacy #MAPoli

