



PLACE Act Talking Points

Bill: H.3246/S.2190, An Act establishing a program for local art and community engagement (PLACE Act)

Sponsors: Rep. Mary Keefe, Rep. Steve Ultrino, Sen. Robyn Kennedy, Sen. Paul Mark

Committee: Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development

ARTICLES AND STORIES ABOUT THE ISSUE:

The 'Beyond Walls' Festival was an Economic Boon for Lynn, Study Find:

<https://www.massdevelopment.com/news/the-beyond-walls-festival-was-an-economic-boon-for-lynn-study-finds>

The formerly named POW! WOW! Worcester is skipping its 2022 street art festival, as its volunteers regroup and eye a smaller future:

<https://www.wbjournal.com/article/the-formerly-named-pow-wow-worcester-is-skipping-its-2022-street-art-festival-as-its>

The Financial Case for Public Art:

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/the-financial-case-for-public-art> Why Public Art for Amherst?

<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/38440/5-Why-Public-Art-in-Amherst?bidId=>

Bloomberg Philanthropies Launches 2022 Public Art Challenge for U.S. Cities:

<https://www.bloomberg.org/press/bloomberg-philanthropies-launches-2022-public-art-challenge-for-u-s-cities/>

The 50 Best Works of Public Art in Greater Boston, Ranked:

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2016/08/29/boston-best-public-art>

Public Art as an Asset Within Development Projects - The Value Proposition:

https://la.uli.org/public_art_asset/

TESTIMONY OUTLINE:

Below is an outline that you can use to create your own testimony for the PLACE Act.

- I. Intro
 - A. Individual: Hello Chair Mark, Chair Domb, and members of the committee for the opportunity to share my support for the [add actual bill numbers and bill name]. My name is [name] and I live in [town]
 - B. Organization: Hello Chair Mark, Chair Domb, and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is [name] and I am testifying on behalf of [organization] in [city/town]. I am here to share our strong support for [add actual bill numbers and bill name].
- II. Why Now?
 - A. Across the Commonwealth - and especially in [town], we see examples of how public art brings people together and beautifies our communities. We also see how public art tells the stories of communities that are underrepresented or disadvantaged, but very much present in Massachusetts.
 - B. Share a personal / organizational story about how this is affecting you / your group.
 1. Where have you seen yourself/community/values represented in public art?
 2. Does public art hold important memories for you? What's your relationship to it?
 3. How has public art elevated the stories of your community?
- III. Share why you believe this bill is part of the solution:
 - A. This bill would
 1. Creates the Program for Local Art and Community Engagement (PLACE) Fund for the selection, design, creation, acquisition, installation, maintenance, and conservation of public art on Commonwealth-owned, managed, or occupied buildings.
 2. It would be administered by the PLACE Commission, which would consist of 13 members who have demonstrated commitments to public art and creative placekeeping. The

PLACE Commission would convene local community advisory groups to ensure commissioned public art projects reflect the cultures and people where the public art is installed.

3. It would prioritize work by and commissions from Massachusetts artists.

IV. Remind the committee why this is urgent:

- A. As we continue to develop and redevelop towns and cities in Massachusetts, it is important that we proactively plan for and around public art spaces. Public art will remain essential in capturing our stories and representing our diverse communities.
- B. I / We strongly encourage the committee to report the [bill number and name] favorably out of the committee and support its passage this session.

TALKING POINTS:

What is the PLACE Act? Why do we need this?

The Program for Local Art and Community Engagement (PLACE) designates a percentage of construction costs on any Commonwealth-owned property and new public construction projects exceeding \$200K for a public art fund. The fund would be used to create and maintain public art in communities across Massachusetts. PLACE codifies the process for commissioning public art, making it easier for cities and towns to engage their residents in developing relevant and inclusive public art for all.

Public art connects us to each other, place, and history. It is also an economic driver for communities that embrace it. As Massachusetts continues to develop and expand our economy, we have an opportunity to build an inclusive, reflective, and beautiful Commonwealth through investments in public art.

What would it do?

- Creates the Program for Local Art and Community Engagement (PLACE) Fund for the selection, design, creation, acquisition, installation, maintenance, and conservation of public art on Commonwealth-owned, managed, or occupied buildings.

- The Commonwealth would have sole ownership of all artworks acquired through the PLACE Fund. The artist would retain copyright of the artwork unless otherwise noted in their contract.
- The PLACE Fund would be held in trust by what was formerly known as the Department of Housing and Community Development, and administered by the PLACE Commission, in consultation with the Mass Cultural Council.
- The PLACE Commission would consist of 13 members who have demonstrated commitments to public art and creative placekeeping.
- The PLACE Commission would be required to convene local community advisory groups to ensure commissioned public art projects reflect the cultures and people where the public art is installed.
- The PLACE Act prioritizes work by and commissions from artists living and working in Massachusetts.
- No less than 1/2 of 1% of funds budgeted for the construction or substantial renovation of any Commonwealth-owned, managed, or occupied building would go to PLACE; no less than 1/4 of 1% of state funds budgeted for new buildings or construction projects over \$200K, excluding funding sources already designated for arts and cultural use, would go to PLACE.
- Funding could also be sourced through donations from individuals, museums, organizations, associations, nonprofits, businesses, estates, foundations, or other entities.

Different arguments to be made:

- Cultural and historical significance - public art connects us to the past, present, and each other. It commemorates our highest ideals and values, and reminds us of histories we never want to replicate. Public art also tells the stories of underrepresented people and cultures and reflects our diversity. Public art is one of the most accessible ways to consume and participate in artistic expression.
- Economic driver - public art is an economic driver for communities that embrace it. When tourists come to see public art installations, they also shop, dine, and otherwise support the local economy. In 2017, the Beyond Walls 10-Day international mural festival in Lynn generated over \$100,000 for local restaurants and businesses and attracted more than 5,000 visitors.
- Travel and tourism - public art is a consistent tourist attraction. People will travel to see The Embrace, North Shore Art Trail, and street art in Salem.
- Beauty - people want to live, work, and vacation in places that are vibrant,

lively and beautiful. We also want to see ourselves reflected in those same places.

Has it worked in other places?

This bill is unique to Massachusetts. While other places have embraced public art and enjoy the benefits of valuing it ([see the Americans for the Arts report for more details](#)), they have not passed a bill like the one being proposed.