

Improve Opportunities for International Cultural Activity

Support The Arts Requirement Timely Service (ARTS) Provision

June 12, 2013

Dear Senator,

We write to urge your support for the Arts Require Timely Service (ARTS) provision, which improves processing for visa petitions filed by, or on behalf of, nonprofit arts-related organizations by **simply ensuring enforcement of current statutory requirements**. The amendment is co-sponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy and Orrin Hatch.

The Senate can act now to ensure that the U.S. visa process for artists is reliable, efficient, and affordable. Congress recognized the time-sensitive nature of arts events when writing the 1991 federal law regarding O and P visas, in which the **USCIS is currently instructed to process O and P arts visas in 14 days**. While USCIS has made recent efforts to observe this timeframe, there is a history of extreme unpredictability in the timing of the artist visa process, with **wait times of up to six months**.

The ARTS provision, would consistently reduce the USCIS processing times for nonprofit O and P arts-related visa petitions to a total of 29 days - twice the current statutory requirement. USCIS would be required to treat any nonprofit arts-related O and P visa petition that it fails to adjudicate within the current statutory 14-day timeframe as a Premium Processing case (an additional 15-day turn-around time), free of additional charge. Previous consideration of the ARTS provision has had strong bipartisan support.

American nonprofit arts organizations and artists – in communities large and small across our country - provide an important public service and boost international diplomacy by presenting foreign guest artists in performances, educational events, and cultural programs in communities across the country. **Only with consistent improvements over time, will confidence in the U.S. visa process continue to be re-built among U.S. petitioning organizations and foreign artists alike, greatly enhancing international cultural exchange.**

Comprehensive immigration reform provides the opportunity to make enduring improvements to the visa process. Please support the Arts Require Timely Service (ARTS) provision.

**American Alliance of Museums
American Federation of Musicians
Americans for the Arts
Association of Art Museum Directors
Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Chamber Music America
Dance/USA
League of American Orchestras
Literary Network**

**Local Learning: The National Network for
Folk Arts in Education
National Alliance for Musical Theatre
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
National Performance Network
Network of Ensemble Theaters
OPERA America
Performing Arts Alliance
The Recording Academy
Theatre Communications Group**