

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

We urge you to support a funding level of \$155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) Interior Appropriations bill. This critical funding supports the NEA's core mission to strengthen the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts engagement, and in which every community recognizes and celebrates its aspirations and achievements through the arts. The NEA reached its peak funding at \$176 million in FY92, and has never fully recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in FY96.

Among many other important arts programs, the Arts Endowment is at the forefront of a national effort to support arts and health in the military. The NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership was established in 2011 to explore how creative arts therapy and arts engagement programs can improve the health and well-being in military healthcare settings. The successful partnership supports therapeutic creative writing, neurological music therapy, and visual art therapy in a clinical setting for service members with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and other psychological health issues. Through the program, highly qualified art therapists work alongside treating physicians to engage patients through the arts to improve communication, externalize and process traumatic events, restore neurological and physical function through non-invasive and cost-efficient treatment. Patients' feedback at the conclusion of the program described their ability to process trauma through these interventions, and to address and confront issues related to identity, frustrations, transitions, grief, personal insight, cognitive skills and memory.

The healing arts program has been so successful, that the NEA expanded the partnership in 2013 to Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in Virginia. There is a growing demand among military treatment facilities for creative art therapy programs, and with the proposed increase in funding, the NEA will be able to reach more of our service members and their families.

In addition to supporting our military service members, the NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of our communities. Arts- and culture-related industries create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These arts businesses represent 3.9 percent of all businesses and 1.9 percent of all employees, respectively. America's arts and entertainment are also leading exports, with \$75 billion annually in overseas sales, creating a trade surplus.

Through a partnership with the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), various aspects of the U.S. creative sector were measured. In 2013, the analysis found that the total dollar amount that the arts and culture sector contributes to the U.S. economy is more than \$704.2 billion, or 4.23 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, more than construction (\$619B) and utilities (\$270B). From the work of nonprofit arts agencies to the impact of cultural tourism, the creative sector is important to state economies all across the country.

Arts and cultural spending has a ripple effect on the overall economy, boosting both commodities and jobs. For example, for every 100 jobs created from new demand for the arts, 62 additional jobs are also created. The BEA analysis also found that 4.7 million workers were employed in the production of arts and cultural goods, receiving \$339 billion in compensation.

Few other federal investments have such a widespread impact and magnifying effect across the nation as does the Arts Endowment. According to the NEA, for every one dollar spent on direct grants, nearly nine non-federal dollars are matched, generating over \$600 million in matching support while at the same time enriching our children and communities with access to the arts they might not otherwise have. Moreover, forty percent of NEA's grant-making budget—approximately \$48 million in FY15—is re-granted through state arts agencies and regional arts organizations. Private support cannot match the leveraging role of government cultural funding.

The requested funding for FY17 will help the NEA maintain its enormously successful programs, including *The Big Read*, *Our Town*, *Challenge America*, *The Mayors' Institute on City Design*, *The Citizens Institute on Rural Design*, *Blue Star Museums*, *Shakespeare in American Communities*, *Art Works*, and *Poetry Out Loud*, which help the NEA reach every congressional district in the country, serving rural and urban communities; impacting veterans, businesses, and schools. In FY15, the NEA granted \$116.9 million in appropriated funds through 2,337 grants, with at least one award reaching every congressional district.

The arts also play a significant role in equalizing educational opportunities. Students with an education rich in the arts have higher GPAs and standardized test scores, lower drop-out rates, and even better attitudes about community service and civic engagement-- benefits reaped by students regardless of socio-economic status. The arts are an irreplaceable way of understanding and expressing the world, and it links our ability to create and innovate in ways beyond comparison. The NEA's education programs have helped to sustain support in local communities for arts education, which has been proven to help close the education achievement gap and also benefit children and adults in many important ways throughout their lives.

We strongly urge you to support NEA funding at \$155 million in the Fiscal Year 2017 Interior Appropriations bill. By approving this level of funding, you will maintain the NEA's ability to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from the arts. We appreciate your attention to this request, and hope we can count on your continued support.

Sincerely,



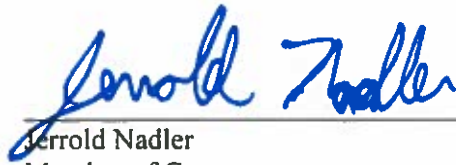
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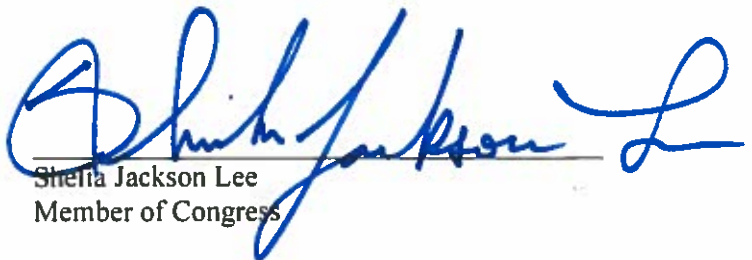
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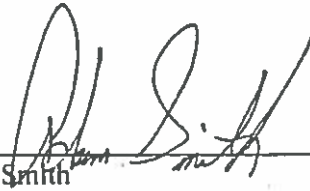
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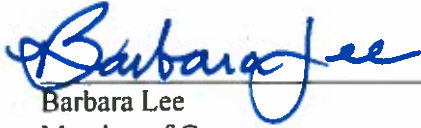
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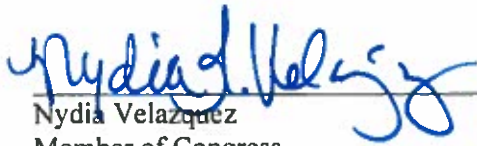
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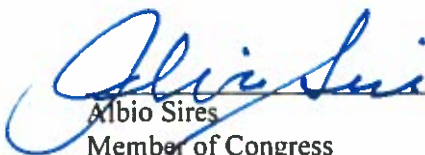
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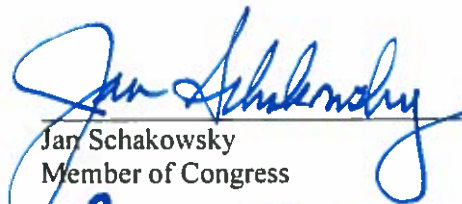
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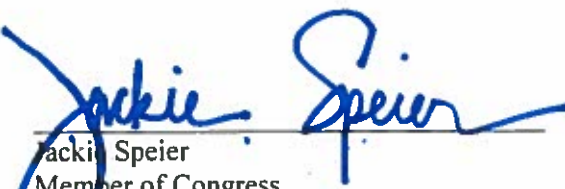

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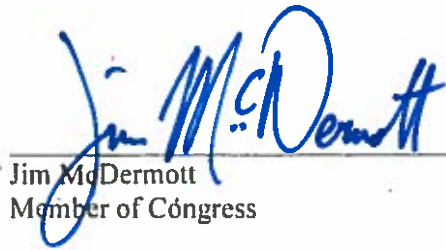

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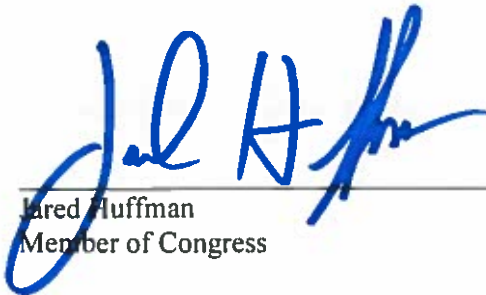

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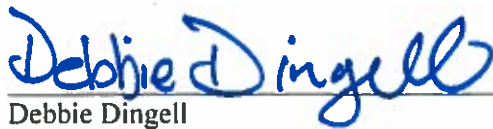
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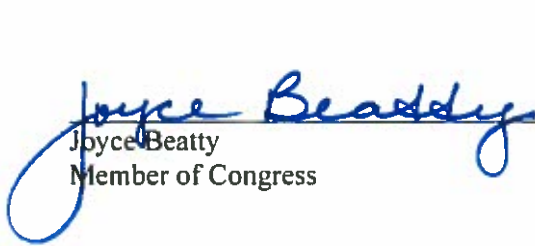
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