

## SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

### National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

We urge Congress to support a budget of \$176 million for the NEA in the FY2008 Interior Appropriations bill to restore funding for the creation, preservation, and presentation of the arts in America through the NEA's core programs—Access to Artistic Excellence, Challenge America: Reaching Every Community, Federal/State Partnerships, and Learning in the Arts. The NEA awarded 1,744 grants in all 435 congressional districts in 2006 through its discipline programs, including dance, design, folk & traditional arts, literature, local arts agencies, media arts, multidisciplinary, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting, theater, and visual arts, which make grants to nonprofit arts organizations. These grants are distributed widely to strengthen arts infrastructures and ensure broad access to the arts. In addition, the NEA distributes 40 percent of its program dollars to state arts agencies, on the condition that each state devotes its own appropriated funds as well.

The NEA is a solid investment in the economic growth of communities, as well as in the educational success of children and youth, through its commitment to reach underserved populations and ensure that all Americans have access to the arts. Our request would restore the NEA to its 1992 funding level of \$176 million, which represents a \$52 million increase, and allow it to increase its grants to arts organizations.

### National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

We urge Congress to provide an increase of \$36 million for the NEH in the FY2008 Interior Appropriations bill, for a total funding level of \$177 million. This increase represents an important step forward in restoring funding for NEH to its historic levels. The NEH, an independent federal agency, is the largest single funder of humanities programs in the United States, providing grants for high-quality humanities projects in four funding areas: preservation, education, research, and public programs. Grants typically go to cultural institutions such as museums, archives, libraries, colleges, universities, state humanities councils, public television and radio stations, film producers, and to individual scholars. NEH extends its reach through annual grants to its partner institutions, the state humanities councils, located in every state and U.S. territory.

The NEH plays an important role in promoting knowledge of and appreciation for the arts in America. It provides critical support for scholarly research in the history, theory, and criticism of the arts. Professional development seminars for K-12 and college teachers help improve the teaching and learning of art history in classrooms across the United States. NEH-supported film and radio programs reach millions of viewers, helping to advance the public understanding of and appreciation for the arts.

### Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) - Office of Museum Services

We urge Congress to support no less than the President's proposed increase to \$39.9 million for grants to museums within the IMLS budget in the FY2008 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. IMLS is an independent Federal agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners. The Office of Museum Services (OMS), responsible for museum programs within IMLS, is dedicated to supporting museums in carrying out their public service, educational, and stewardship roles in connecting the whole of society to the cultural, historical, and scientific understanding that constitute our heritage, held in trust for the nation. The President's request provides an increase of \$8 million for programs such as Museums for America, Conservation Project Support, and 21st Century Museum Professionals.

In reauthorizing IMLS in 2003, Congress underscored the essential contributions of museums to a democratic society, which leads us to a new vision where learning is seen as a community-wide responsibility supported by both formal and informal education. America's more than 16,000 museums attract more than 865 million visits annually from families, children, and individuals seeking enriched learning resources and cultural contact through collections, exhibits, and tours. OMS supports all types of museums, including art, history, science, children's, specialized institutions, and living collections such as zoos and aquariums.

## Arts Education through the U.S. Department of Education

We urge Congress to appropriate \$53 million for the U.S. Department of Education's Arts in Education programs in the FY2008 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. We also urge Congress to require that the U.S. Department of Education conduct much-needed research on the status of arts education in America's public schools, including the Fast Response Statistical Survey and the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The Arts in Education programs support newly emerging models that improve arts learning in high-poverty schools. The Model Development and Dissemination program has funded a total of 105 projects, identifying models of excellence in arts education that impact schools and communities nationwide. The Professional Development grants program has supported 56 projects that serve as national models. Increased funding will allow more model projects to be supported and will allow their findings to be more widely disseminated. Also, Congress should require the U.S. Department of Education to conduct much-needed research on the status of arts education in America's public schools, including the *Fast Response Statistical Survey and the National Assessment of Educational Progress*.

As Congress begins reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), it should ensure that all American students reap the benefits of a full, comprehensive education in the arts. Congress must provide support for state and local education agencies to ensure that arts education is fully implemented as a core academic subject, and it should include arts education in reauthorization hearings. The arts are designated as a "core academic subject," but implementation of NCLB has led to the erosion of arts education in the schools. A report from the Center for Education Policy concludes that, since the enactment of NCLB, 22 percent of school districts surveyed have reduced instructional time for art and music. Nevertheless, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings has said, "Many educators across the country have shown that a focus in NCLB on reading and math is not mutually exclusive of the arts and music. In fact, we all know that a well-rounded curriculum that includes the arts and music contributes to higher academic achievement." Congress must address the law's unintended consequences, which have diminished the presence of arts education in our schools.

## Encouraging Charitable Gifts to Arts and Culture

We urge Congress to make permanent the "IRA Rollover" provision of the Pension Protection Act, S. 819 and companion H.R. 1419 bill, which is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2007. The IRA Rollover provision permits donors age 70.5 and older to make tax-free charitable gifts directly from their IRAs to charities, up to an annual ceiling of \$100,000. Before the IRA Rollover provision was enacted as part of the Pension Reform Act of 2006, individuals who wished to make charitable gifts from their retirement accounts had to withdraw funds and treat them as taxable income, reducing the amount available for donation to charity. Congress should also allow creators to take a fair-market value deduction for contributions of their own works to nonprofit arts organizations (see Artists' Deduction section below). Individual members should co-sponsor the stand-alone versions of these two bills.

In most other countries, governments are the sole provider of services in fields ranging from education to health care to arts and culture. The United States, by contrast, supports a private charitable sector that provides many of these services instead. More than one million charitable organizations across the nation receive crucial—but indirect—government help through tax benefits that encourage charitable gifts by generous individuals. The above measures will encourage more charitable giving, including gifts of art as well as cash, which will strengthen arts organizations and allow them to provide more services to the public. These measures will encourage Americans to be as generous as possible rather than being limited by arbitrary caps and other restrictions. Such support will help keep access to the arts and humanities affordable for all segments of society, subsidizing thousands of programs and other activities that serve our citizens.

## Allow Artists a Tax Deduction for Gifts of Their Own Work

We urge Members of Congress to co-sponsor S. 548, the "Artist-Museum Partnership Act," offered by Sens. Patrick Leahy and Robert Bennett, or the "Artists' Contribution to American Heritage Act" that will be offered in the House. The two bills are identical except for their title. Most museums, libraries, educational institutions and archives lack funds to acquire works of art, relying instead on donations. Unfortunately, however, creators cannot take a tax deduction for the fair market value of works that they donate and are instead limited to a deduction for the cost of materials. Without incentive to give their works to nonprofit institutions, creators generally sell their works to private collectors, and the public loses. This bipartisan legislation would simply allow artists to take a fair-market value deduction for works given to and retained by nonprofit institutions.

## Improving the Visa Process for International Artists

Delays by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are making it increasingly difficult for international artists to appear in the United States. Nonprofit arts organizations confront long waits and uncertainty in gaining approval for visa petitions for foreign guest artists. These delays began in June 2001 (prior to September 11), when USCIS adopted a Premium Processing Service, guaranteeing processing within 15 calendar days at an unaffordable cost for most nonprofit arts organizations - \$1,000 per petition.

We urge Congress to enact legislation, which was approved by the Senate in 2006, that will reduce the total processing time to a maximum of 45 days for “O” and “P” petitions filed by, or on behalf of, nonprofit arts-related organizations. Current USCIS practice compounds the growing risk that foreign guest artists will be unable to enter the United States in time for their engagements, causing financial burdens on nonprofit arts organizations and potentially denying the American public the opportunity to experience international artistry due to delays and cancellations. Global cultural exchange is now more important than ever, and the United States should be easing the visa burden for foreign guest artists.

## Cultural Exchange Programs in the U.S. Department of State

We urge Congress to increase funding by \$10 million for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department’s Office of Citizen Exchanges in the FY2008 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. This increase should be designated for the Professional Exchanges and Cultural Grant Program, currently funded at about \$4 million.

The Cultural Programs Division is the primary Department of State element that focuses on cultural diplomacy. Its programs support U.S. foreign policy objectives by promoting friendly relations with other countries, initiating and maintaining critical dialogues that develop and spread mutual understanding between nations. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in congressional testimony, “We need to do much more to confront hateful propaganda, dispel dangerous myths, and get out the truth. We will increase our exchanges with the rest of the world.” Authorized by the Fulbright-Hays Act, the State Department’s cultural exchange programs promote ties among private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad, presenting U.S. history, society, art, and culture in all of its diversity to overseas audiences.

## The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)

We urge Congress to support a budget of no less than \$430 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as part of the FY 2008 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. CPB is a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967 to promote noncommercial public telecommunications. In the authorizing language, Congress acknowledged public broadcasting’s role in transmitting arts and culture. “It is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes.” CPB does not produce or broadcast programs; it awards grants to public broadcasting stations, independent producers, and program development and production organizations such as NPR, PBS, the National Minority Consortia, Public Radio International (PRI), and American Public Media. CPB distributes roughly \$387 million in federal funds annually to PBS, NPR, and hundreds of public radio and TV stations around the country.

Public broadcasting provides Americans of all ages with a broad range of high-quality arts and cultural programming. Television programs such as *Great Performances* present the best in music, dance, and theater free of charge to audiences across America. Public television and radio stations are often the only source of broadcast arts programming in many rural parts of the country. More than 80 million Americans view public television and more than 27 million listen to public radio for programming that covers public affairs, science, history, and the arts. Programs such as *Dance in America* bring companies from all corners of the globe into viewers’ living rooms.

## Arts Advocacy Day 2007 National CoSponsors

*Arts Advocacy Day is a national advocacy and grassroots campaign organized by **Americans for the Arts** and CoSponsored by more than 90 national organizations representing thousands of arts, cultural, business, civic, and educational groups and individuals nationwide.*

Abrakadoodle Remarkable Art Education  
Actors' Equity Association  
The Actors' Fund of America  
Alliance for the Arts  
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, Inc.  
Alliance of Artists Communities  
Altria Group, Inc.  
Amateur Chamber Music Players  
American Alliance for Theatre and Education  
American Arts Alliance  
American Association of Community Theatre  
American Association of Museums  
American Craft Council  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Federation of Musicians  
American Guild of Organists  
American Institute for Conservation of  
    Historic & Artistic Works  
American Institute of Graphic Arts  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Society of Composers, Authors &  
    Publishers  
American String Teachers Association  
American Symphony Orchestra League  
Americans for the Arts  
Americans for the Arts Action Fund  
Art Dealers Association of America  
ArtTable, Inc.  
Association for Theatre in Higher Education  
Association of African American Museums  
Association of American Publishers  
Association of Art Museum Directors  
Association of Independent Colleges of  
    Art & Design  
Association of Performing Arts Presenters  
The Authors Guild  
Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI)  
Care2  
Chorus America  
Classical Dance Alliance  
College Art Association  
Colorado Thespians  
Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)  
Dance/USA  
DuSable Museum of African American History  
Educational Theatre Association  
Fractured Atlas  
Grantmakers in the Arts  
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees  
International Child Art Foundation  
International Council of Fine Arts Deans  
International NETWORK of Schools for the  
    Advancement of Arts Education  
League of American Theatres and Producers  
The League of Resident Theatres  
Literary Network  
The MacDowell Colony  
MENC: The National Association for Music Education  
Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation  
Middlebury College Center for the Arts  
Modern Language Association  
Music for All Foundation  
Music Teachers National Association  
NAMM - The International Music Products Association  
National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences  
National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture  
National Alliance for Musical Theatre  
National Art Education Association  
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies  
National Council for the Traditional Arts  
National Dance Association  
National Dance Education Organization  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts  
National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts  
National Humanities Alliance  
National Music Council  
National PTA  
New Moves, Inc.  
New York Artists Equity Association, Inc.  
New York Society of Women Artists  
New York State Dance Education Association  
OPERA America  
Recording Industry Association of America  
Royal Academy of Dance  
Society for the Arts in Healthcare  
Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers  
Southern Arts Federation  
Theatre Communications Group  
Theatre Development Fund  
United Arts of Central Florida  
United States Conference of Mayors  
VH1 Save The Music  
VSA arts  
Writers Guild of America, East  
Yaddo  
Young Audiences, Inc.