TESTIMONY TO CITY COUNCIL ON FEDERAL FUNDING FOR DANCE AND CULTURE

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Testimony to City Council on Federal Funding for Dance and Culture

By Lane Harwell, Executive Director

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On behalf of the service organization Dance/NYC, I strongly endorse Proposed Resolution No. 1393-A and call upon President Donald Trump to fully fund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and not to eliminate or diminish any of these agencies in any form.

In doing so, I join the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations, and colleague advocates working across creative disciplines in recognizing both these federal agencies' significant contributions to New York City's cultural and civic life and the opportunity for increased local-national cooperation to advance the creative sector and its economic and social benefits. With the proposed resolution, New York City can take a lead in a national movement to protect funding levels, ensure the continued flow of creativity and ideas, and move the country forward.

I also bring key data on dance in New York City to make the case for discipline-specific funds. Dance/NYC's recent report, ***State of NYC Dance and Workforce Demographics*** (2016), made possible in part by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, offers snapshot and trend analyses of federal funding to local dance groups with DataArts' Profiles. For a sample of 172 dance groups, the snapshot analyses show:

- Direct annual funding, including significant National Endowment for the Arts funding, totals approximately $2.7 million, 21% of total government support;
- Federal support serves dance groups of all types studied, especially dance makers focused on creation and/or performance (63%), as well as educational (9%), presenting (18%), and service organizations (10%), including Dance/NYC;
- Federal funding serves organizations of all annual operating budget sizes ; and
- Federal support drives activity throughout New York City, particularly through groups headquartered in Manhattan (85%), Brooklyn (14%), and The Bronx (1%).

While of considerable value, federal funding for a trend sample declined 37% over a six-year period studied, signaling need for increased advocacy for discipline-specific funds. Funding declined for dance organizations of all types, with the exception of educational organizations, and for organizations of all budget sizes. The smallest groups, those with budgets of less than $100K, were the hardest hit (69% decline). These groups are the most ethnically and racially diverse and the most likely to employ disabled New Yorkers.

Any further cuts to the federal funding of the arts will have a grave impact on groups that are already struggling and diminish the sector's capacity to deliver public value. Conversely, every dollar added would serve national interests by driving economic and social impact, for which there are clear benchmarks, from attendance and cultural tourism indicators to jobs and field expenditures. For example, the State of NYC Dance sample generated $302 million in annual expenditures, a healthy return on federal investment.

In making the case for dance, Dance/NYC joins the national service organization Dance/USA and the Performing Arts Alliance. Dance/NYC thanks our partners and the New York City Council for its leadership.

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