

DANCE/USA STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT'S BUDGET ELIMINATION OF NEA

Thursday, March 16, 2017

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Dance/NYC works in alliance with Dance/USA to advance a national agenda for dance

Act Now to #SavetheNEA

This morning, President Trump released a budget blueprint that would substantially decrease non-defense spending in an effort to add \$54 billion to defense spending. This reduction includes the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a federal agency with a budget of \$148 million, 0.004 percent of the federal budget. It also includes eliminating other cultural agencies, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Museum and Library Service, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The budget blueprint also reduces funding to key U.S. Department of Education programs that support school partnership with arts organizations and would reduce funding to exchange programs at the U.S. Department of State, which engage artists in cultural diplomacy.

History

While Presidents have proposed cuts to the NEA, this is the first time that a President has proposed elimination of the federal agency. Congress has proposed elimination of the cultural agencies, however they have consistently demonstrated bipartisan support in the final budget, resulting in a recent \$2 million increase to the NEA.

Just two weeks ago, Congressional Arts Caucus Co-Chair Louise Slaughter (D-NY), along with Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC), Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY), Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) and Rep. David Price (D-NC), voiced support for the cultural agencies during the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee congressional hearing. Rep. Leonard Lance (R-NJ) submitted written testimony urging Congress to continue funding the NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA) stated that bipartisan support for the cultural agencies would likely continue and Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) did not anticipate Congressional support towards efforts to decrease funding to non-defense programs.

This is just the beginning of the budget process for fiscal year 2018, and the president's budget is non-binding. Congress must still propose and pass a budget. In fact, Congress must still determine how to fund the current fiscal year, as 2017 is currently funded through a continuing resolution through the end of April.

What Can Advocates Do?

Now is the ideal time to [connect with your members of Congress](#) and tell them why continued support for the NEA is critical to our nation and communities. It is crucial that all lawmakers in the House and Senate hear from arts advocates.

- Invite lawmakers or their staff to visit your public or community programs so that they can learn more about how dance is supporting healthy communities.
- Make an appointment to meet with your lawmakers or their staff to share stories about how dance companies are making a positive impact in their districts and why NEA support is crucial.
- [Write letters to your members of Congress](#) on Arts Advocacy Day, March 21. Dance/USA is once again a National Partner for this event. As part of the Legislative Planning Committee, Dance/USA worked with other national arts organizations to revise and update a range of policy statements provided to lawmakers about the issues that impact dance and the arts sector.

Dance/USA continues to advocate for the field, meeting with Congressional offices and working with national arts organization partners. Find additional talking points about the value of the NEA, as well as other key legislative issues, by visiting [Dance/USA's advocacy page](#).

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