

PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE - FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Tuesday, February 1, 2011

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February 1, Washington, DC - As Congress and the Administration roll out their plans for the country's policy and funding future, the arts community must raise its voice and stress the public value of federal support for the arts. In 2011, Congress and the Administration will be focused on reductions to the federal budget and tax reform proposals, which will likely include charitable giving incentives. That means communicating the value of the arts in your community to your elected officials is more important than ever. The arts are cornerstones of economically-strong communities nationwide, and federal policy and funding support should recognize and reflect that fact.

In an effort to reduce the current budget deficit, Congress has begun work on the FY12 funding bills. Late last month, the Republican Study Committee (RSC), a caucus comprised of 176 conservative members of the House of Representatives, presented a proposal to cut nearly \$2.5 trillion from the federal budget over the next 10 years. The proposal calls for the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), arts education programs at the U.S. Department of Education, the Community Development Block Grant Program, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, all programs that provide support to arts organizations and the constituents they serve. The Spending Reduction Act of 2011 bill, H.R. 408, reflects this proposal and has been introduced in the House.

You can play a role in making sure legislation like this does not gain traction. As the federal appropriations process moves forward, the Performing Arts Alliance will be calling on you in a succession of Action Alerts to contact your members of Congress and urge their support for specific federal funding programs as well as support for critical charitable giving incentives for the nonprofit sector.

Today, the Alliance invites you to be in touch with Congress to communicate the value of the NEA, which supports the performing arts and your community. We have created a sample letter for you to personalize. It is important to include information about you and your organization when communicating with your legislators.

As a reminder, please continue to build relationships with policymakers and brief them on the issues important to the performing arts field. Introduce yourself and your organization, add them to your mailing list, invite them to a performance, request a meeting, and establish yourself as a powerful resource for them. If you decide to invite your member(s) of Congress to a performance, be sure to check the [Performing Arts Alliance Guide to Congressional Gift Rules](#) in advance.

What's At Stake:

NEA grants to organizations and state arts agencies help to maximize the economic and social contributions the arts make in communities nationwide.

The nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports 5.7 million full-time equivalent jobs, and returns \$12.6 billion to the federal government in income taxes.

The arts infrastructure of the United States is critical to the nation's cultural well-being as well as its economic vitality. It is supported by a remarkable combination of government, business, foundation, and individual donors. In a striking example of federal/state partnership, the NEA distributes 40 percent of its program dollars to state arts agencies, conditional on each state devoting its own appropriated funds. This partnership ensures that each state has a stable source of arts funding and policy. These grants, combined with state legislative appropriations and other dollars, are distributed widely to strengthen arts infrastructures and ensure broad access to the arts.

The NEA has provided strategic leadership and investment in the arts for over 40 years. Among its proudest accomplishments is the growth of arts activity in areas of the nation that were previously underserved or not served at all. Americans can now see professional productions of high quality in their own home towns, and arts organizations in every congressional district now receive direct NEA grants.

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