

TESTIMONY TO CITY COUNCIL ON CREATENYC

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By Lane Harwell, Executive Director

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On behalf of the service organization Dance/NYC, and as a member of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission, I congratulate the City of New York on CreateNYC, its first-ever cultural plan, and commend the City for engaging nearly 200,000 New Yorkers through the planning process to advance a creative sector that serves all.

I am pleased by how significantly the plan builds on research and recommendations delivered by partners such as Dance/NYC. In particular, first-year priorities include:

- Increased funding, with a focus on individual artists, as recommended by the [Advancing Fiscally Sponsored Artists & Art Projects](#) report published this spring by Dance/NYC, with nine fiscal sponsor partners; and
- An expanded diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda that expressly addresses disability and disability artistry, as has been called for by Dance/NYC's Disability. Dance. Artistry. research and partners such as the new Disability/Arts/NYC Task Force (DANT).

The plan also advances the priorities of affordable workspace for artists and increased arts education that Dance/NYC advocated during the planning process.

For Dance/NYC, the plan is a significant milestone and a launching pad for strengthened and new advocacy. With the City's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable sector in place, it is now incumbent on the City to operationalize that vision, fund it at adequate levels, and measure progress over time.

As the City establishes its evaluation framework, I strongly advocate for tracking the success of each planning strategy by "creative discipline" to ensure that the art form of dance, as well as all of our peer disciplines, is equitably served. The reality of how greatly artists' needs and opportunities differ by discipline is underscored by Dance/NYC's latest study, [Advancing Fiscally Sponsored Dance Artists & Projects](#), which shows the chronic undersupply of dance rehearsal space reaching a crisis point.

Among the planning successes that can already be counted is a strengthened, louder, and more collaborative arts advocacy community. As three examples, I am impressed by the work of the People's Cultural Plan to tackle the challenges of inequity in arts culture, of DANT to create a platform for disability arts, and of the New York City Artists Coalition and Dance/NYC's partners on the #LetNYCDance campaign to advance Local Law #1652 (prime sponsor, Council member Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.) to amend the existing cabaret licensing law and advance creativity and free expression. It's time to #LetNYCDance.

In celebrating CreateNYC, I thank Committee Chair James van Bramer, Council member Stephen Levin, and the whole New York City Council for their vision to legislate a requirement for comprehensive cultural planning; Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs for their leadership in realizing the plan; and all of my fellow New York City residents for their contributions.

Dance/NYC's mission is to promote the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds values of equity and inclusion into all aspects of the organization. It works in alliance with [Dance/USA](#), the national service organization for professional dance.

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