

April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

The Association for Theatre in Education (ATHE), the national professional organization for college theatre professors in the United States, is a National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2008. Your past support of federal funding for the arts has been extremely important for our country, and we urge you to support an increase in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities. We particularly urge you to increase funding for the important Arts in Education programs through the U.S. Department of Education.

Federal funding for the arts through the NEA and other federal programs are important investments in the economic growth of every community in the country. The nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion annually in economic activity, supports 4.85 million full-time equivalent jobs and returns \$10.5 billion to the federal government in income taxes.

We endorse a restoration of funding to the \$176 million level of funding of 1992. Arts enhance communities through grants for arts education and improved access to the arts for all Americans, especially in underserved communities.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education Arts in Education funds provide important support for the development of rigorous arts education programs, professional development of arts educators, and the ongoing national arts education initiatives of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and VSA arts. These programs invest in the development, documentation, evaluation and dissemination of model projects that strengthen and integrate arts curriculum in elementary and middle schools. State and local education agencies can replicate and adapt these models to provide rigorous arts instruction for all students.

Again, we appreciate your past support of the arts and strongly encourage you to support increased funding for the NEA and NEH, and the U.S. Department of Education Arts in Education program.

Sincerely,



Steve Peters
President
Association for Theatre in Higher Education



Henry Bial
Vice President, Advocacy
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