



SERVING COMMUNITIES. ENRICHING LIVES.

Steven D. Spiess Chairman

Robert L. Lynch President and CEO

April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress,

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With more than 45 years of service and a network of more than 100,000 organizational and individual members and stakeholders across the country, it is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

As the national host of Arts Advocacy Day, Americans for the Arts is joined by 86 other national arts, humanities, and civic organizations, representing thousands of cultural organizations in every state, city, and town in urging the 110th Congress to support legislation that promotes the arts. Details of our congressional requests are outlined under the Issue Briefs tab in this Congressional Arts Handbook. In summary, they are the following:

Federal Cultural Agencies: We ask you to support a budget of \$176 million for the **National Endowment for the Arts**, which would allow increases for the NEA's core mission and allow it to undertake significant capacity-building initiatives so that arts organizations and artists can bring the best in the arts to all Americans. We also ask Congress to increase funding for the **National Endowment for the Humanities**, and to approve an increase of \$15 million for the **Office of Museum Services** within the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Arts Education: We ask you to support an appropriation of \$53 million to fund the Arts in Education programs of the **U.S. Department of Education's** Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Tax Legislation: We ask you to increase charitable giving by allowing tax-free distributions from Individual Retirement Accounts. We also urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1524/S. 548 allowing artists to take a fair-market value deduction for contributions of their own work to museum, libraries, and cultural institutions.

International Cultural Programs: We urge you to support an increase of \$10 million in funding for the State Department's Cultural Programs Division to improve cultural exchange efforts.

Visa Process: We urge you to have the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services adopt common-sense reforms to improve and expedite processing for the visas used by foreign guest artists and cultural organizations entering the United States for scheduled performances and exhibitions.

We thank you for supporting the creative and historic work of America's cultural organizations.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO

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Director of Federal Affairs