



SERVING COMMUNITIES. ENRICHING LIVES.

April 13, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

This year, Americans for the Arts celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year of service as the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. As a network of more than 100,000 organizational and individual members and stakeholders across the country, we are 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 111<sup>th</sup> Congress to support legislation which 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 \$180 million for the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**, which would allow increases for the NEA's core programs and provide for an exciting new community development initiative called Our Town. We also ask Congress to support an appropriation of \$50 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 urge you to cosponsor S. 405/or identical House legislation allowing artists to take a fair-market value deduction for contributions of their own work to museum, libraries, and cultural institutions. We also ask you to increase charitable giving by enacting legislation to make permanent the IRA Charitable Rollover provision, allowing tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts.

**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

Narric Rome  
Director of Federal Affairs