



April 13, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

The **Colorado State Thespians** are proud to co-sponsor **Arts Advocacy Day 2010**. Colorado Thespians is the Colorado chapter of the International Thespian Society, an organization dedicated to promoting creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking through supporting high school theatre programs.

Colorado Thespians actively supports educators as they endeavor to help students build 21st Century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and invention. We present a state conference each year for over 2000 high school students, at which students work with industry professionals and have the opportunity to apply for over \$50,000 in scholarships. We witness what the arts do for these students – how they build self-esteem and interpersonal communication. We understand that the arts appeal to students who are already incredibly involved in their education and to students who don't connect with anything else in high school. We see the arts keep students involved in high school and increase graduation rates. We know, from teachers and students, that the arts save students in public education.

It is because of what we know about the arts that we come to you now. On this day of arts advocacy, we ask members of Congress to consider in your decision making the importance of arts education to the students of our schools. Your support is needed.

We ask that you please support the following actions as described in the issue briefs that follow:

- Retain the arts in the definition of core academic subjects of learning.
- Require annual state reports on student access to all core academic subjects.
- Expand public/private partnerships between schools and arts organizations.
- Improve national data collection and research in arts education.
- Reauthorize the Arts in Education programs of the U.S. Department of Education.
- Work to ensure that all four art forms are included in future NAEP tests.
- Deploy arts education as an economic development strategy.

On behalf of all those in our nation whose lives have been positively affected by the arts, we encourage you to recognize that, even in our trying economic times, a portion of our tax dollars should be directed toward supporting arts.

The arts save students. The arts save people. *Please*, save the arts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jay Seller', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jay Seller, Ph.D.
Chapter Director
Colorado State Thespians