



April 13, 2010

Dear Member of Congress,

Free Press is proud to be a National Co-sponsor for Arts Advocacy Day 2010. We are a national organization working for diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, quality journalism and universal access to communications. All of these issues are critical to strengthening and bolstering the arts and culture communities in the United States.

The Internet has revolutionized the way artists and creative communities collaborate, connect, create and distribute their work. It has broken down barriers to distribution and facilitated an explosion of content online from all corners of the artistic community. Musicians and filmmakers can distribute their work without seeking the approval of industry gatekeepers. Opera houses, dance troupes and community theater groups can promote their events, sell tickets and gain international notoriety thanks to the Internet.

But the digital divide is still vast. Without universal access to high-speed broadband, artists and the new audiences they seek to reach will not be able to participate in the creative marketplace of the Internet. And without open networks that ensure users are free to choose what Web sites to visit or applications will run online, independent and interesting voices will be fighting an uphill battle. Congress must take action to foster universal broadband access and protect Network Neutrality so the open Internet can continue to be the level-playing field where anyone can produce and distribute content.

Finally, we ask that Congress take steps towards a significant increase in funding for public media in the United States. The U.S. has one of the lowest funded public media systems in the world – our annual public subsidy amounts to a paltry \$1.35 per capita, compared to more than \$100 per capita in Denmark and Finland. We believe that with increased funding shielded from the political whims of the annual appropriations process, public media can strengthen the arts and cultural community through quality news and information, content distribution and educational opportunities.

Sincerely,

Craig Aaron  
Senior Program Director  
Free Press