



April 13, 2010

Dear Member of Congress,

VSA arts, the international organization on arts and disability, is proud to support Arts Advocacy Day 2010. While President Obama's FY 2011 budget proposal provides an overall increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Education, it combines funding for Arts in Education with categorical programs into a state-based competitive block grant for Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education. Although support of Arts in Education is referenced, the direct grant to VSA arts and to the Kennedy Center education programs would be eliminated if this proposal is adopted.

We ask that Congress restore this funding and increase its support for these important programs by appropriating \$53 million for Arts in Education. Specifically, VSA arts requests this vital support that creates achievement and inclusion for students with disabilities through arts education as well as professional development opportunities for teachers.

VSA arts provides the only federal support for arts in education for students with disabilities. Each year, we offer arts-based programs in creative writing, dance, drama, music, and the visual arts. More than 7 million people participate in VSA arts' programs every year through a network of affiliates throughout the United States. The grant to VSA arts, shared with our affiliates, directly supports: a reliable infrastructure of arts services for people with disabilities, as well as their teachers and families; professional development programs for educators on how to incorporate arts-based curriculum; and resources about effective practices in making the arts accessible to everyone.

Research shows that a complete arts education contributes to improved academic performance—particularly for students with disabilities. VSA arts' programs cultivate lifelong educational skills and encourage people with disabilities to contribute to the cultural and economic lives of their communities. We urge you to restore the Arts in Education program of the U.S. Department of Education for FY 2011 and increase support of these important initiatives.

Sincerely,

Soula Antoniou  
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