



AMERICANS
for the ARTS

STATEMENT OF

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**TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES**

U.S. SENATE

ON

FY 2006 APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CORPORATION ON PUBLIC BROADCASTING

JULY 11, 2005

On behalf of Americans for the Arts, I am pleased to provide you this statement in support of funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). As you know, recently the FY06 funding for CPB was threatened during House subcommittee consideration. The House bill was substantially improved during full committee debate and floor action, but it is still inadequate. I write to you today to ask for your support in keeping CPB fully funded.

Americans for the Arts is the service organization for the nation's 4,000 local arts agencies, which provide \$1 billion of annual funding and support for the arts and humanities at the local level. It is important to note at the outset that many local arts agencies are important partners, and funders, of local public television and radio stations. We are asking the federal government to continue to honor its commitment to public broadcasting, just as local arts agencies continue to honor theirs.

CPB supports public television and radio through its partners, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR). These organizations provide important access to the arts for millions of Americans. With both community-based arts programming, and nationally televised shows such as "On Stage at the Kennedy Center" and "Austin City Limits," public broadcasting is often a primary source of arts programming in many rural parts of the country. Public broadcasting also serves as an important source of information about live arts performances and exhibitions. Any reduction to its budget would drastically reduce the access that many Americans have to the arts.

Public broadcasting's national programs are probably well known to members of the Committee. While you are probably familiar also with local programming in your own state, I would like to provide a few examples of local arts programming from around the country.

- In Pittsburgh, WQED, the nation's first community-owned television station, airs "Performance in Pittsburgh" featuring recorded-in Pittsburgh concert highlights as well as interviews with Pittsburgh musicians and presenters. The WQED-FM, the radio station

produces “Pittsburgh Symphony Radio” presenting the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's recent concerts at Heinz Hall, archival tapes and tour performances.

- Iowa Public Television (IPT) has a show named, “A Century of Iowa Architecture,” which uses high definition cameras to capture the details and drama behind the construction and design of Iowa’s most significant buildings. Also, as part of its School-to-Careers programming IPT has programming specifically on becoming an artist. The National Employer Leadership Council (NELC) highlighted Iowa Public Television in its publication *Best Practices in School-to-Careers: Rural Issues*.
- The Mississippi Arts Council and Mississippi Public Broadcasting produced a seven-part radio show titled, “Sounds From Around the Corner” which included gospel and old-time fiddling, as well as more recent immigrant traditions such as Latino music and classical Indian singing – all performed by Mississippi artists.
- In Alaska, CPB has provided funding for the weekly “AK” cultural magazine show produced by the Alaska Public Radio Network. In 2003, Public Radio News Directors International voted AK second place nationally for "Best Public Affairs Program".

Budget cuts would heavily impact public radio broadcasting, as CPB funding represents 15 percent of the budget for many individual member stations of NPR. If they lose that support, many of them will have to make severe cuts to their programming and local services. This will especially impact rural areas and stations serving minority populations, as they heavily rely on federal funding for their operating budgets. While local and state arts agencies also support these stations, they could not make up for a loss of federal funding on this scale.

While the House partially restored CPB funding, its legislation, as passed, eliminated \$39 million to help local stations switch to digital transmission, \$40 million to upgrade aging satellite technology, and made a \$23 million cut to the "Ready to Learn" program, which provides money for the creation of shows such as "Sesame Street" and "Reading Rainbow." These are all important items for CPB operations. We hope you will fully fund these programs in your subcommittee consideration, and that you will fight for them in conference with the House.

With your leadership, we can insure that CPB funding is adequately funded, and that public television and radio can continue to provide high quality arts and cultural programming to our nation.