

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
2256 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

We urge you to support a funding level of up to \$154.466 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) Interior Appropriations bill to support the NEA's core mission to strengthen the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts engagement, and in which every community recognizes and celebrates its aspirations and achievements through the arts. The NEA reached its peak funding at \$176 million in 1992, and has never fully recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in FY 1996.

The Arts Endowment is at the forefront of a national effort to support arts and health in the military. The NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership was established in 2011 to explore how creative arts therapy and arts engagement programs can improve health and well-being in military healthcare settings. The successful partnership supports writing, visual arts, and music arts therapy for patients at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE). In the program, a creative arts therapist works with patients using art therapies to improve communication, externalize and process traumatic events, as well as improve and restore neurological and physical function through non-invasive and cost-efficient treatment. Patients' feedback at the conclusion of the program described their ability to process trauma through these interventions, and to address and confront issues related to identity, frustrations, transitions, grief, personal insight, cognitive skills and memory.

The healing arts program has been so successful, the NEA expanded the partnership in 2013 to bring visual arts therapy and expressive writing activities to military patients at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital's satellite NICoE center in Virginia. There is a growing demand among military treatment facilities wanting art therapy programs, and with the proposed increase the NEA will be able to bring healing arts program to more of our service members.

In addition to supporting our military service members, the NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of our communities. Arts and culture-related industries create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These arts businesses represent 3.9 percent of all businesses and 1.9 percent of all employees, respectively. America's arts and entertainment are also leading exports, with estimates of more than \$30 billion annually in overseas sales.

Through a partnership with the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), various aspects of the U.S. creative sector were measured. In 2012, the analysis found that the total dollar amount that the arts and culture sector contributes to the U.S. economy is more than \$698 billion, or 4.32 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, more than construction (\$586.7B) or transportation and warehousing (\$464.1B).

Arts and cultural spending has a ripple effect on the overall economy, boosting both commodities and jobs. For example, for every 100 jobs created from new demand for the arts, 62 additional jobs are also created. The BEA analysis also found that 4.7 million workers were employed in the production of arts and cultural goods, receiving \$334.9 billion in compensation.


Few other federal investments have such a widespread impact and magnifying effect across the entire nation as does the Arts Endowment. According to the NEA, for every one dollar we spend on federal arts initiatives we see nine non-federal dollars leveraged, generating over \$600 million in matching support while at the same time enriching our children and communities with access to the arts they might not otherwise have. Moreover, forty percent of all NEA program funds—approximately \$49 million in FY14—is re-granted through state arts agencies. Private support cannot match the leveraging role of government cultural funding.


The requested level of funding for FY16 will help the NEA maintain its enormously successful programs, including *The Big Read*, *Our Town*, *Challenge America*, *The Mayors' Institute on City Design*, *The Citizens Institute on Rural Design*, *Blue Star Museums*, *Shakespeare in American Communities*, *Art Works*, and *Poetry Out Loud*, which help the NEA reach every congressional district in the country, serving rural and urban communities; impacting veterans, businesses, and schools. The NEA awards grants to all 441 Congressional districts. In FY 14, the NEA granted \$116.1 million in appropriated funds through 2,276 grants reaching 434 congressional districts.

The arts also play a significant role in equalizing educational opportunities. Students with an education rich in the arts have higher GPAs and standardized test scores, lower drop-out rates, and even better attitudes about community service-- benefits reaped by students regardless of socio-economic status. Art is an irreplaceable way of understanding and expressing the world, and it links our ability to create and innovate in ways beyond comparison. The NEA's education programs have helped to sustain support in local communities for arts education, which has been proven to help close the education achievement gap and also benefit children and adults in many important ways throughout their lives.

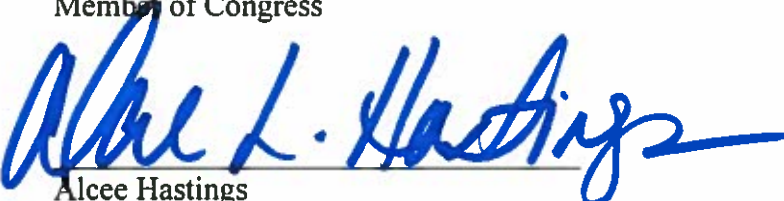
We strongly urge you to support NEA funding at \$154.466 million in the Fiscal Year 2016 Interior Appropriations bill. By approving this level of funding, you will maintain the NEA's ability to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from the arts. We appreciate your attention to this request, and hope we can count on your continued support.

Sincerely,

  
Louise M. Slaughter  
Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus  
Member of Congress

  
Leonard Lance  
Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus  
Member of Congress

  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

  
Alcee Hastings  
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Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



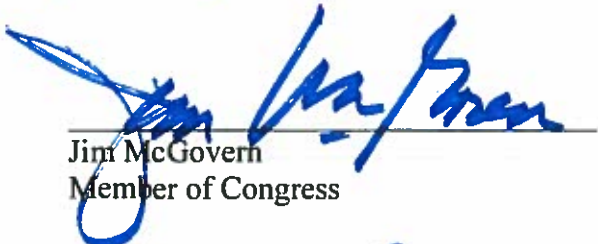
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Member of Congress



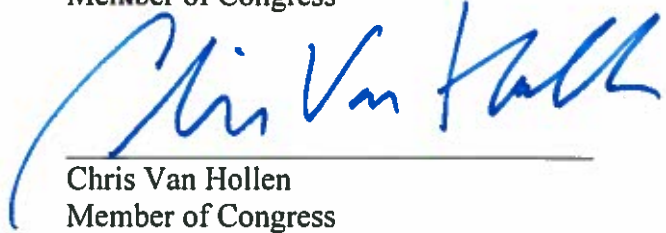
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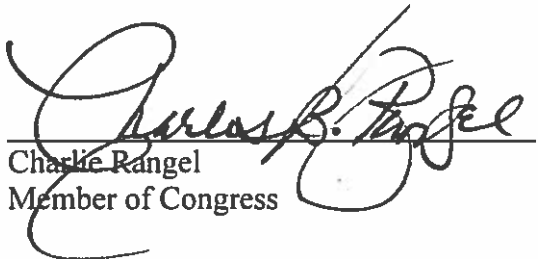
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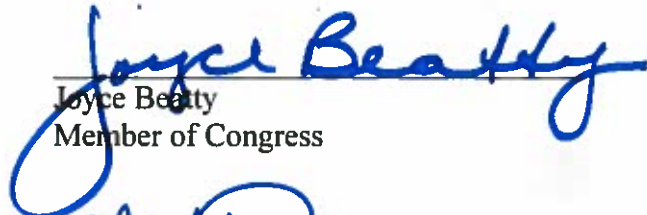
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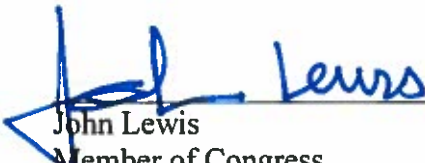
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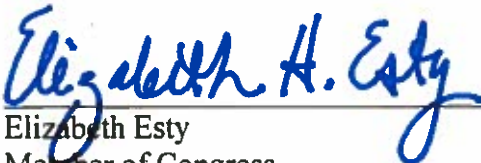
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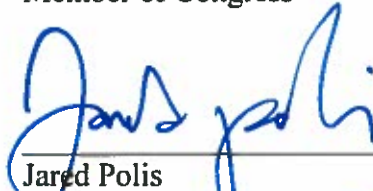
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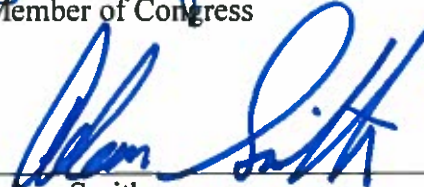
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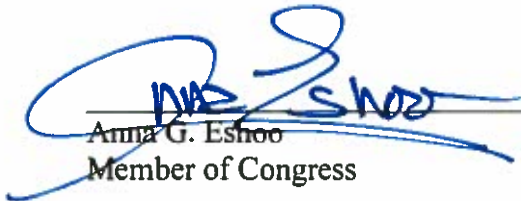
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Keith Ellison  
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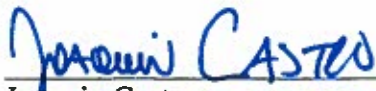
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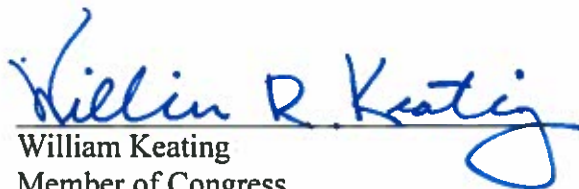
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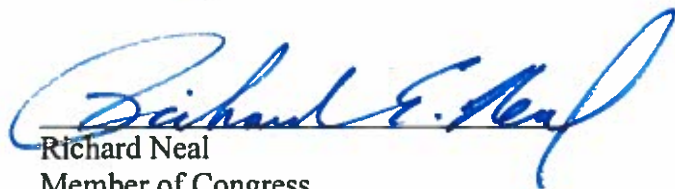
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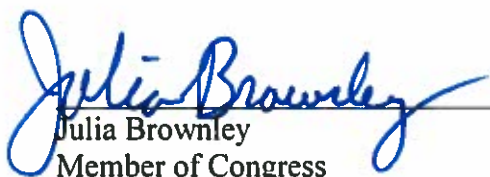
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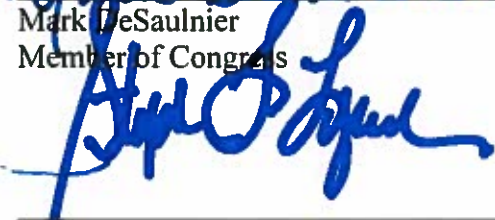
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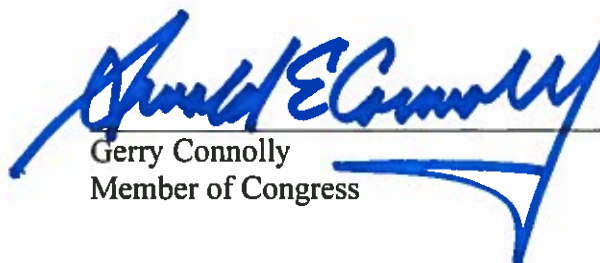
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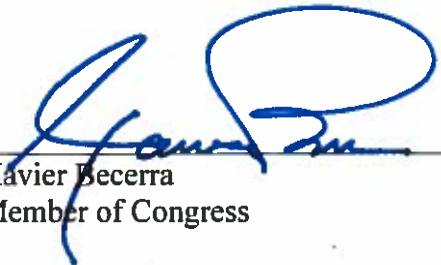
  
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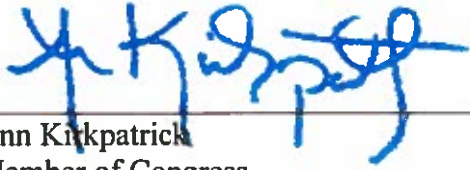
  
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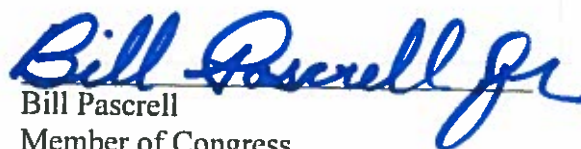
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