April 7, 2006

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
H-150 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

We urge you to support full funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at $170 million in the Fiscal Year 2007 Interior Appropriations bill. The NEA was last funded at this amount in 1994, and has never recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in FY1996. Today, its programs remain seriously underfunded. The American public wants and needs an affordable investment in the arts.

While the President’s FY2007 budget request is level with current FY2006 funding for NEA, the budget request reallocates funds at the expense of some valuable programs. For example, Challenge America ensures that direct grants from the NEA reach underserved populations, including places where opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability. Challenge America uses the arts to enhance America’s communities through grants for arts education, youth-at-risk, cultural preservation, community arts partnerships and improved access to the arts for all Americans. Through this program, NEA grants are awarded to artists in almost every Congressional District.

Federal funding for the arts has a ripple effect on our economy, and it is critical to leveraging private funding. An investment in NEA is a great investment in the economic growth of every community. The nonprofit arts industry alone generates $134 billion annually in economic activity, supports 4.85 million full-time equivalent jobs and returns $10.5 billion to the federal government in income taxes.

Moreover, the NEA supports life-long learning in the arts which is critical to the development of our children. 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 as well as to benefit children and adults in many important ways. Kids score higher on their SATs, have greater self-confidence, and are more focused in their studies when they have arts education.

An increase to $170 million would ensure that the NEA can continue to support the creation, preservation and presentation of the arts in every corner of the country, as well as fund popular...
initiatives like Challenge America, American Masterpieces, Shakespeare in American Communities, Operation Homecoming, and Jazz Masters. Without an increase, the NEA will be unable to maintain or expand programs or undertake new initiatives without diminishing existing programs.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to increase NEA funding to $170 million in the FY 2007 Interior Appropriations bill. By approving this budget increase, you will strengthen 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 support.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Lucia M. Slaughter
Carolyn McCarthy
Rick Latham
James Langevin

[Signatures]

Chaffetz
Zoe Lofgren
Jim Perdue
Ed Case

[Signatures]

Kiah E. Watson
Cynthia H. Eshoo
Mike Ferguson

[Signatures]

Wm. Lacy Clay
Robert Wexler
Jim Pugsley
John B. Larson
David Wu
Bobby M. McCullin
Ellen O’Hara

Rush Holt
James Baldem
John S. Esty
Jim McDermitt
Tom McClintock

Ami Bera
Faizan绽
Raul Ruiz

Oscar L. Brady
John Sherman
Sam Farr

Darrell E. Issa
Vince F. Southerland
John Kline
Cosigners

1. Louise M. Slaughter
2. Christopher Shays
3. Neil Abercrombie
4. Gary L. Ackerman
5. Thomas Allen
6. Robert E. Andrews
7. Tammy Baldwin
8. Xavier Becerra
9. Shelley Berkley
10. Howard L. Berman
11. Sanford Bishop
12. Earl Blumenauer
13. Leonard Boswell
14. Rick Boucher
15. Sherrod Brown
16. Lois Capps
17. Michael E. Capuano
18. Benjamin L. Cardin
19. Russ Carnahan
20. Julia M. Carson
21. Ed Case
22. Ben Chandler
23. Donna M. Christensen
24. Wm. Lacy Clay
25. John Conyers
26. Joseph Crowley
27. Elijah E. Cummings
28. Susan Davis
29. Danny K. Davis
30. Diana DeGette
31. William Delahunt
32. Charles W. Dent
33. John D. Dingell
34. Rahm Emanuel
35. Eliot Engel
36. Anna Eshoo
37. Bob Etheridge
38. Sam Farr
39. Chaka Fattah
40. Michael A. Ferguson
41. Bob Filner
42. Barney Frank
43. Gene Green
44. Raul M. Grijalva
45. Luis V. Gutierrez
46. Stephanie Herseth
47. Tim Holden
48. Rush Holt
49. Michael M. Honda
50. Steny H. Hoyer
51. Jay Inslee
52. William J. Jefferson
53. Nancy L. Johnson
54. Eddie Bernice Johnson
55. Timothy V. Johnson
56. Sue Kelly
57. Dale E. Kildee
58. Dennis J. Kucinich
59. James R. Langevin
60. Rick Larsen
61. John B. Larson
62. Jim Leach
63. Barbara Lee
64. Sander M. Levin
65. John Lewis
66. Frank LoBiondo
67. Zoe Lofgren
68. Edward Markey
69. Jim Matheson
70. Doris O. Matsui
71. Carolyn McCarthy
72. Betty McCollum
73. Jim McDermott
74. James P. McGovern
75. Michael R. McNulty
76. Gregory W. Meeks
77. Charlie Melancon
78. Michael Michaud
79. Juanita Millender-McDonald
80. Brad Miller
81. James P. Moran
82. Jerrold Nadler
83. Richard E. Neal
84. Eleanor Holmes Norton
85. James L. Oberstar
86. Major R. Owens
87. Frank Pallone
88. Bill Pascrell, Jr.
89. Donald M. Payne
90. Collin C. Peterson
91. Jon Porter
92. David Price
93. Nick J. Rahall II
94. Jim Ramstad
95. Charles B. Rangel
96. Silvestre Reyes
97. Mike Ross
98. C.A. Ruppersberger
99. Bobby Rush
100. Tim Ryan
101. Martin Olav Sabo
102. Bernard Sanders
103. Jan Schakowsky
104. Adam B. Schiff
105. David Scott
106. Robert R. Simmons
107. Adam Smith
108. Vic Snyder
110. Pete Stark
111. Ellen O. Tauscher
112. John F. Tierney
113. Tom Udall
114. Chris Van Hollen
115. Diane E. Watson
116. Melvin L. Watt
117. Henry A. Waxman
118. Anthony D. Weiner
119. Robert Wexler
120. Lynn Woolsey
121. David Wu
122. Albert R. Wynn