Co-Sponsor The Artist-Museum Partnership Act

From: The Honorable John Lewis
Sent By: decarlo.mclaren@mail.house.gov
Date: 6/17/2013

REWARD HARDWORKING AMERICANS WITH EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER THE TAX CODE

Join as an Original Cosponsor of the Artist-Museum Partnership Act of 2013

Deadline for Original Cosponsors: June 26, 2013

Cosponsors in the 112th Congress: Reps. Blumenauer, Chu, Cohen, Doggett, Foxx, Green, Grijalva, Gutierrez, Holt, Johnson (GA-04), Maloney, McCollum, McDermott, McGovern, Michaud, Nadler, Pascrell, Pierluisi, Price, Schock, Slaughter, Thompson (CA-01), Tiberi, Yarmuth

June 17, 2013

Dear Colleague:

I invite you to join me as an original cosponsor of the Artist-Museum Partnership Act of 2013 (formerly H.R. 1190 in the 112th Congress).

This bill encourages American artists – including writers, composers, and the like – to donate their work to public institutions (such as schools, museums, and libraries), thus ensuring the preservation of American art for future generations. The Artist-Museum Partnership Act would correct an imbalance in the tax code and allow the artists to take a tax deduction for the fair market value of the works that they donate.

Over the past thirty-five years, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of original works of art offered to institutions. One of the biggest contributors to this decline in gift giving has been an inequity in our tax code, one that unnecessarily discourages artists from donating their work directly to non-profit institutions. Art collectors may claim a tax deduction for the fair market value of an artistic work, but the artists themselves may only deduct the cost of supplies – ink, paper, canvas, etc. – that, in nearly all cases, is a nominal amount. This completely discounts the value of the time and effort spent in creating their work.

Prior to 1969, the tax code allowed artists to claim a tax deduction when they donated their works to public institutions. Since the repeal of this provision, our libraries, universities, museums, and other public institutions have suffered the consequences. The Library of Congress, for example, has experienced one of the most significant declines of gifts. Prior to 1969, the Library of
Congress received 15-20 large gifts of manuscripts and letters every year. In the four years after the law was changed, the Library of Congress received only one such gift.

The Artist-Museum Partnership Act would right this wrong, and put back in place the law that allowed hardworking American artists to claim a tax deduction for the fair market value of works they donate to public institutions. The Artist-Museum Partnership Act will make a critical difference in an artist’s decision to donate his or her work.

I hope that you will stand with me and encourage American artists, once again, to share their work with the American public and inspire future generations. If you would like to become a cosponsor or for additional information, please contact DeCarlo S. McLaren on my staff at 225-3801 or DeCarlo.McLaren@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

/s
John Lewis
Member of Congress