



March 7, 2017

Dear Mr. President, Senators, and Members of Congress,

As leaders of organizations, artists, and arts advocates across the state of California, we write today to urge your support for the National Endowment for the Arts. This small federal agency helps bring vital programs of arts and culture to every corner of this nation and every county of California. Communities large and small across our state benefit from the more than \$9 million dollars awarded annually by the NEA to hundreds of California arts groups.

Each year, the NEA supports critical programs of art and education in every Congressional District in the United States. One of the Endowment's core goals is to open doors of access to the arts for all Americans. Contrary to some assumptions, most of the Endowment's grants are awarded to small and mid-sized nonprofit groups, and many of the programs funded by the NEA are targeted at economically disadvantaged communities, both urban and rural. Furthermore, nearly half of all NEA funds go to support state arts agencies, including the California Arts Council. With support from the Endowment, the impact of the California Arts Council is felt in every California county, funding programs in the most remote rural areas and the most underserved inner-city neighborhoods. The same is true for other state arts agencies across the nation.

As more than 20 US Senators recently wrote in a letter to the President, programs supported by the NEA not only help Americans express their values and build bridges between cultures, they also serve as important drivers of the economy. According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, arts and culture are a \$704 billion industry, equalling 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP. The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$135 billion in economic activity each year and returns \$22.3 billion in government revenue.

We in California can attest with these Senators that the arts promote tourism, prepare our students to think creatively, a necessary skill in the 21st century workplace, and generate jobs for more than 4 million people employed in the nation's creative economy. Here in California, according to Americans for the Arts, the creative industries employ 485,797 people and account for 5% of our state's total businesses.

No arts organization survives on NEA funding alone -- the grants are too modest and are focused solely on outstanding projects rather than general operating support. But NEA grants are significant in attracting additional support from private and local sources. Typically, each dollar awarded by the NEA leverages another nine dollars from other sources.

Some argue that the federal government has no business funding the arts, but in fact the ideals of the NEA are written into our Constitution. As two dozen Senators reminded the President, Article I, Section 8 mandates that Congress be empowered to promote the "Progress of Science and useful Arts." Federal support for the arts aligns with the founding principles of this country.

The arts are not a partisan issue. Every President since the NEA's inception has supported the work of the National Endowment for the Arts, including President Reagan, under whose Administration the Endowment's funding stood at an all-time high.

We urge you to vigorously support sustained, and even increased, funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (today just 45 cents per American). Federal support for the arts reflects our national values and is crucial to our economy, to our students, and to our local communities, here in California and across the country.

Thank you for your careful consideration and for your continued support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION