April 4, 2014

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

Dear Chairman Calvert:

We urge you to support a funding level of $154.466 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) Interior Appropriations bill to support the NEA’s core mission to bring the arts to every American. 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.

According to the NEA, for every one dollar we spend on federal arts initiatives we see nine non-federal dollars leveraged, generating roughly $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 $46 million in FY13—are re-granted through state arts agencies. Private support cannot match the leveraging role of government cultural funding.

This level of funding for FY15 will help the NEA maintain its extremely successful programs, including The Big Read, Our Town, Challenge America, The Mayor’s Institute on City Design, Blue Star Museums, Shakespeare in American Communities and Operation Homecoming, which help the NEA reach every congressional district in the country, serving rural and urban communities; impacting veterans, businesses, and schools. In FY13, the NEA awarded over $112 million in appropriated funds through just over 2,100 grants reaching all 441 congressional districts. Few other federal investments have such a widespread impact and magnifying effect across the entire nation.

The NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of communities nationwide. Each year, the nonprofit arts industry generates $135.2 billion in economic activity, and provides 4.13 million full-time jobs. At the same time, this industry returns $9.59 billion to the federal government in income taxes. The National Governor’s Association and the U.S. Conference of Mayors recognize the enormous value of the arts in our communities and regional economies by approving resolutions and publishing reports in support of federal arts funding.

Arts and culture-related industries provide direct economic benefits to states and communities: they create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These businesses employ 3.35 million people, representing 4.42 percent of all businesses and 2.15 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.

Just last year, the American creative sector was also measured by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA and the NEA developed an “Arts and Culture Production Satellite Account” which calculated the arts and culture sector’s contributions to U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) at 3.2 percent—or $504 billion—of

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current-dollar GDP in 2011. From the work of nonprofit arts agencies to the impact of cultural tourism, the creative sector is important to state economies all across the country.

The NEA supports life-long learning in the arts. 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. Students with an education rich in the arts have better grade point averages in core academic subjects, score better on standardized tests, and have lower drop-out rates than students without arts education.

We strongly urge you to support NEA funding at $154.466 million in the Fiscal Year 2015 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

James P. Moran
Interior Subcommittee Ranking Member
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Shelia Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Michael G. Grimm
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Corrine Brown
Member of Congress
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Janice D. Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Timothy H. Bishop  
Member of Congress

John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress

Sam Farr  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

Albie Sires  
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Ann M. Kuster  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Colleen W. Hanabusa
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress
Luis V. Gutierrez  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
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Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress

David Price  
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress
Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Steve Israel
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Filemon Vela
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Julia Brownley
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Jared Huffman
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Allyson Y. Schwartz
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Robert A. Brady
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Michelle Lujan Grisham
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Lois Capps
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Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress
Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress

Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Bruce L. Braley
Member of Congress

Matthew A. Cartwright
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress
John D. Dingell  
Member of Congress

Eliot Engel  
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

Nick J. Rahall, II  
Member of Congress

Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

Michael F. Doyle  
Member of Congress

Timothy J. Walz  
Member of Congress

James A. Himes  
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress
April 8, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol, S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol, S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
SD-131
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
SH-125
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairman Reed, and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We write to express appreciation for your continued support of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and to urge you to again support a $155 million funding level for each of the endowments. Federal support for the arts and humanities is a vital economic, educational, and cultural priority that impacts communities large and small all across the United States, serving veterans, aiding businesses and redevelopment, enhancing student learning, and impacting our future. For almost 50 years, the NEA has provided strategic leadership and investment in the arts and has proudly expanded arts activity across the nation with the mission “to bring arts to every American.” Every dollar spent on federal arts initiatives leverages nine non-federal dollars enriching children and communities through access to the arts that they would otherwise not have.

Federal funding for the NEA acts as seed money that generates massive economic return. The non-profit arts industry generates over $135 billion annually in economic activity and supports 4.13 million full-time jobs. Additionally, the federal government enjoys a direct return of $9.59 billion in income taxes, as well as the indirect benefit of improved education, community development, and increased business activity across the country. Just last year, the American creative sector was also measured by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) through their "Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account" which calculated the arts and culture sector's contributions to U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) at 3.2 percent—or $504 billion—of current-dollar GDP in 2011.

The requested funding for FY15 for the NEA will help the endowment maintain its extremely successful programs, including The Big Read, Our Town, Challenge America, The Mayor’s Institute on City Design, Blue Star Museums, Shakespeare in American Communities, and the NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership. In FY13, the NEA awarded over $112 million in appropriated funds through just over 2,100 grants reaching all 435 congressional districts. Few other federal investments have such a widespread impact and magnifying effect across the entire nation.

The NEH is the primary source of federal support for humanities research and related activities in the United States. It provides support for professional development to scholars, educators, curators, librarians, historians, filmmakers, and more. Through the endowment’s efforts, our national heritage is preserved, civic institutions are strengthened, and Americans are better prepared to address the challenges in a constantly changing world. In addition to appropriated funding, the NEH is able to leverage
significant, non-federal contributions through competitive grant awards, with direct matching totaling more than $2 billion over the last few decades.

Federal funding for the NEH includes support for state humanities councils that work in partnership with the endowment to reach millions of Americans each year through teacher institutes, family literacy programs, and thousands of other efforts. With this extensive network of state humanities councils and general NEH programming, the endowment reaches every state and territory across the nation.

Thanks to your leadership, the NEA and NEH continue to play a vital role in every state. We urge you to continue to support federal funding of the arts and humanities in FY15 with a $155 million funding level for each of the endowments in the final appropriations legislation. We appreciate your attention to this vital funding, and look forward to working with you on this and the other important issues facing our nation.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

Tim Johnson  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator
Dick Durbin
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator