

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 24, 2021

The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski

We write today to express our steadfast support for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). For more than 55 years, the NEA and NEH have promoted educational and cultural experiences that generate tremendous economic returns for communities in every single state in the country. We urge your continued bipartisan support and efforts in recent years to increase appropriations. We respectfully request your support for funding of at least \$201 million, for each of the NEA and NEH for Fiscal Year 2022.

Since its creation in 1965, the NEH has funded groundbreaking scholarly research, preserved essential cultural and educational resources, cataloged more than 63 million pages of our nation's historic newspapers, and served every Congressional district and territory in the country by helping tens of millions of adults and young people grapple with the lessons of history. Annually, the state humanities councils provide tens of thousands of free educational programs in rural, suburban, and rural communities. Also, established in 1965, the NEA supports art and education programs across the country. Access to the arts for all Americans is a core principle of the Endowment. The majority of NEA grants go to small- and medium-sized organizations, and a significant percentage of grants fund programs in high-poverty communities throughout the country.

NEA and NEH have provided vital support during the pandemic, enabling arts and cultural organizations to remain financially viable and able to continue to serve their communities and preserve their histories. State humanities councils alone made 4,500 grants to humanities infrastructure in their states and territories. NEA and NEH and the state humanities councils gave vital support to local arts and humanities organizations so that they could respond quickly to the need for virtual programming to support students, educators, and the community at large in coping with the unprecedented upheaval in their daily lives. Congress has provided \$420 million in supplemental COVID-19 relief funds to these agencies to help distribute to the creative and cultural workforce. The arts and cultural sector has been measured by the Small Business Administration and the Bureau of Economic Analysis as among the most highly impacted economic sectors.


NEA and NEH serve as an important economic driver at the community level. The arts generate economic growth and employ more than 5.2 million people in the creative industries nationally. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector is a \$920 billion

industry, or 4.3 percent of the nation's GDP. Arts and humanities education are critical to prepare our students for the innovative thinking required in the 21st century workplace. Students with an enriched education that includes the arts have higher GPAs and standard test scores and lower drop-out rates. Every federal dollar spent on arts grants sparks collaborations that leverage more than nine non-federal dollars through additional support by private foundations, individuals, and other public sources.

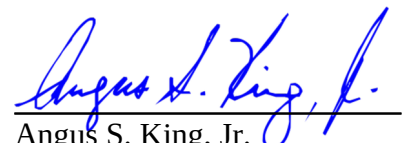
As an example of the tremendous value NEA and NEH provide nationwide, both agencies offer healing programs for those who serve in our Armed Services and their families, as well as veterans reintegrating into civilian life. The NEH's Warriors Scholar Project provides an "academic boot camp" for veterans entering or returning to college. Since 2012, the NEH program has served over 500 veterans and expanded to 11 school locations across the nation. The NEA's Military Healing Arts Partnership provides art therapy for active-duty military patients and their families to improve communication, process traumatic events, and improve neurological and physical function. The Creative Forces program started at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center has now expanded to 11 other facilities across the country.

Thanks to your continued leadership, the NEA and NEH play a vital role in every state. We appreciate your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you on this and other important issues facing our nation.


Sincerely,




Jack Reed
United States Senator



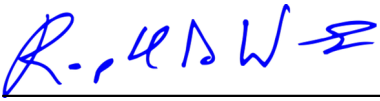
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



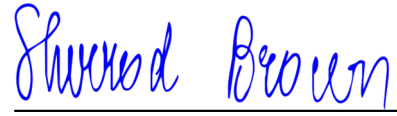
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



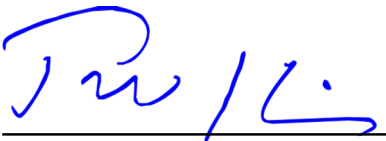
Sherrod Brown
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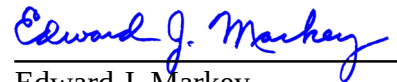
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



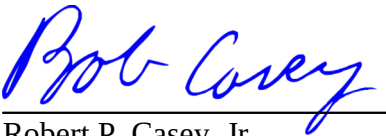
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United States Senator



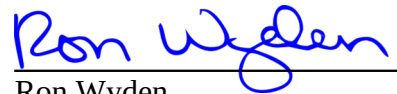
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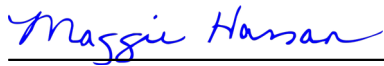
Ron Wyden
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Benjamin L. Cardin
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Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



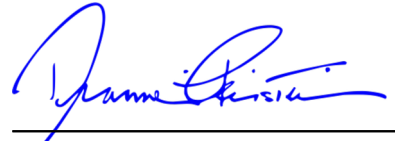
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



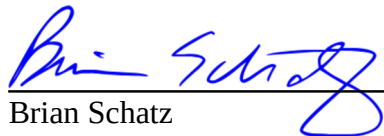
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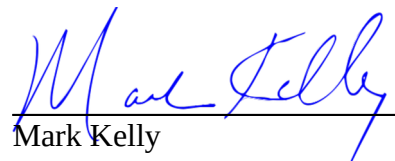
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Debbie Stabenow
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Mark Kelly
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Elizabeth Warren
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Mark R. Warner
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Gary C. Peters
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Mazie K. Hirono
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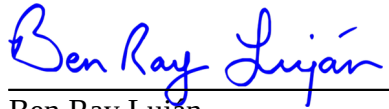
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Tammy Baldwin
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Richard J. Durbin
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Ben Ray Lujan
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Bernard Sanders
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Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



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Sheldon Whitehouse
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Kyrsten Sinema
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