



**AMERICANS** for the **ARTS**  
ACTION FUND

# news

ISSUE 2 2006

## Building a Stronger Arts Movement

Citizens taking action for the arts—that's the goal of the Arts Action Fund. Arts Advocacy Day 2006—held March 13–14 in Washington, DC—demonstrated that our efforts are paying off and that citizen arts activists are growing in numbers and influence with each year.



Americans for the Arts Action Fund Artist Committee members (from left) Brian Stokes Mitchell, Alec Baldwin, and Pierre Dulaine (center) meet with Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) (third from left) along with Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert Lynch and Americans for the Arts board member Maria Bell. Photo by Jim Saah.

On Monday, March 13, Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* columnist and chairman of the Dana Foundation, William Safire, delivered the 19th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy to a capacity crowd at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Safire spoke about the Dana Foundation's research into whether brain science can establish a causal link between arts training and other cognitive skills, and he praised Americans for the Arts' efforts to "channel the energies of tens of thousands of citizens—urging private and public support of actors, dancers, playwrights, musicians, and students who dream of being all of the above." To read the entire speech, visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/events/2006/hanks/transcript.asp](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/events/2006/hanks/transcript.asp).

On Tuesday, Arts Advocacy Day began with the Congressional Arts Breakfast—presented in conjunction with the Congressional Arts Caucus—featuring speakers and performers including Academy Award nominee Alec Baldwin; Pierre Dulaine, founder of American Ballroom Theater and subject of the films *Mad Hot Ballroom* and *Take the Lead*; critically acclaimed

family musician Dan Zanes; and Brian Stokes Mitchell, Tony Award-winning actor and president of The Actors' Fund of America. Stokes told the crowd, "Supporting the arts is not a red or a blue issue. It's not Republican or Democrat. It is just right."

Congressional leaders Rep. Chris Shays (R-CT) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY), co-chairs of the Congressional Arts Caucus, and Rep. Jim Leach (R-IA), winner of the Congressional Arts Leadership Award for his tireless efforts on behalf of the arts, also spoke at the breakfast.

Arts leaders and advocates then fanned out across Capitol Hill and met with more than 300 Members of Congress. More than 5,000 online advocates also participated in the day, sending e-mails to their Members of Congress encouraging them to take action on several arts-related issues.



Illinois State Arts Advocacy Captain Alene Valkanas (center) and fellow arts advocate meet with Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL). Courtesy of Julie Adrianopol.

# Giving VOICE to the Arts

## SHAPING FEDERAL ARTS POLICY

The Arts Action Fund monitors arts policy at the federal level and helps bring citizens' voices to the table when important arts issues are debated. For detailed legislative updates for each of these items, please visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews).

## Record Number of Representatives Call for Congressional Support for Arts Education

The Congressional Arts Caucus is one of the largest caucuses in the House of Representatives and an essential partner in our work to advance the arts in America. This year, a record number of House members co-signed a letter authored by Caucus co-chairs Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Chris Shays (R-CT)—along with Reps. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), and Jim Leach (R-IA)—calling for an increase to \$53 million for the Department of Education's arts education programs for FY 2007. Last year, 106 House members joined a similar effort, up from 88 members in 2004. It is extremely gratifying to see such steadily growing support for arts education in Congress.

## Americans for the Arts Submits Congressional Testimony on the NEA, Arts Education

Americans for the Arts recently submitted testimony to Congress on two arts-related issues. In testimony to the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, we called for an increase of \$45 million for the NEA in FY 2007, which would give the agency a total of \$170 million. Our testimony to the Labor-HHS-Education

Appropriations Subcommittee recommended an increase of \$17 million for the Department of Education's arts education programs, which would put them at \$53 million. Both funding levels are also supported by the Congressional Arts Caucus. Congress will work on the Interior and Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bills over the course of the spring and summer, completing them during the fall.

## Congressional Arts Handbook Available Online

The 2006 Congressional Arts Handbook is now available online. The handbook, which was used by advocates and delivered to Members of Congress during Arts Advocacy Day, includes detailed information on important issues affecting the arts, as well as contact information for senators and representatives. To view and download the handbook, visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD/handbook](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD/handbook).

## SUPPORTING ARTS ADVOCACY IN THE STATES

### New York State Arts Budget Increases for the First Time in Six Years

Arts organizations in New York are eagerly anticipating the first budget increase for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) in six years. The state



New York arts advocates wore their successful message on buttons at the state Capitol.



## Message from the President

What an exciting time this is for the arts, as you'll see when you read through this edition of *Arts Action News*. More Members of Congress than ever signed on to this year's "Dear Colleague" letter asking for increased funding for the NEA, and more online activists than ever signed on to take action through the Arts Action Fund website. It's all a part of our growing movement for the arts. And it's all thanks to generous and dedicated supporters like you.

You can help build on this incredible momentum to ensure that funding for the arts and arts education is part of the debate during this critical election year by

attending candidate forums and asking key arts policy questions of federal candidates whenever and wherever the opportunity arises.

Your support has been critical to our movement-building efforts so far, and I am counting on your continued generosity and activism for the arts throughout this election year. Thank you, as always, for standing with us and for the arts.

Robert L. Lynch  
President and CEO, Americans for the Arts Action Fund



## Arts Policy Questions to Ask Federal Candidates

1. What steps would you take to significantly increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts so that our community's arts organizations can present more high quality arts programs for all of our citizens?
2. What specific federal education policies would you promote so that our children can receive a comprehensive arts education in their local schools?

[www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org)

Senate and Assembly approved a \$7.1 million increase for the agency, an increase of 19 percent.

The success rests largely on revamped advocacy efforts this year by the Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations. They formed a network of nine regional captains covering 57 of the 62 counties statewide. Regional captains helped organize meetings with legislators and letter-to-the-editor campaigns leading up to Arts Day 2006 in March. Through their state partner link to the Americans for the Arts E-Advocacy Center, they were able to generate almost 3,000 e-mails to Albany to coincide with Arts Day.

Another key to success was a consistent, focused message across the entire state. The campaign asked legislators to invest \$2.50 per person across the state in arts funding. Buttons and banners read, "Invest \$2.50 for the Arts."

It is worth noting that \$500,000 will go to a new arts stabilization fund to provide small and midsize organizations with funds to bridge cash flow and operating expenses. This is the first time a piece of the arts budget will go through the economic development committees of the state Senate and Assembly, rather than the higher education committees.

Congratulations to our New York State Captain and Alliance Executive Director Judith Kaufman Weiner and all the advocates in New York.

### **Partnership Launched with National Conference of State Legislators**

Arts advocacy at the state level has been enhanced by a recent collaborative effort between Americans for the Arts and the National Conference of State Legislators. The two organizations have agreed to co-present the first Annual State Arts Legislator of the Year Award in August 2006. A call for nominations for the award will go out through the State Arts Action Network soon. In addition, Americans for the Arts and the state legislators will collaborate on arts-related research and will work together to promote the arts.

### **New Jersey Launches Statewide Arts Education Survey**

The first ever Visual and Performing Arts Education Survey—measuring course offerings, student participation, resources, policies, instructional support, and community resources for the arts in New Jersey's schools—was conducted in April. The effort was the most comprehensive survey of arts education ever undertaken in our country. School principals, superintendents, and arts teachers statewide submitted information for the survey. Results will become available throughout the summer and fall of 2006.

### **New Efforts Promote Louisiana Music Industry**

Two recent developments in Louisiana show promise with helping to support the state's cultural economy and its many musicians and performers. A new nonprofit agency, the Louisiana Music Export Office, has been retained by the state as a consultant to help promote Louisiana musicians. The state also introduced a new tax incentive for the music industry in January 2006. The new Sound Recording Investor Tax Credit is modeled on the state's highly successful film tax credits program, which has boosted movie production in Louisiana tenfold since it was launched in 2002. Americans for the Arts Action Fund is working closely with arts leaders in Louisiana to help restore the state's vibrant arts community.

## **LOCAL ACTION FOR THE ARTS**

### **Mayors Feature Arts in Rebuilding New Orleans**

On May 3–5, 2006, prominent U.S. mayors and arts advocates gathered during Jazz Fest in New Orleans to discuss ways to help the city rebuild its arts and culture. Arts Action Fund Executive Director Nina Ozlu presented information on how communities across the country have used cultural districts to bring their cities back to life and the use of public art projects for community revitalization. Conference attendees also toured the New Orleans Musicians' Village, a new project launched by New Orleans native Branford Marsalis to provide permanent affordable housing for the city's musicians who lost their homes to Hurricane Katrina.



Mayors observe a painting by a New Orleans art student who was displaced by Hurricane Katrina. From left: Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz; North Miami Beach Mayor Kevin Burns; Rochester (MN) Mayor Ardell F. Brede, and Dearborn (MI) Mayor Michael Guido. Photo courtesy of The U.S. Conference of Mayors.

### **School Curriculums Narrowing to Emphasize Reading and Math**

A report released in April by the Center on Education Policy found that since the passage of No Child Left Behind legislation, 71 percent of the nation's 15,000 school districts had reduced the hours of instructional time spent on history, music, and other subjects to make more time for reading and math. It is important that major news organizations, including the *New York Times*, devoted significant coverage to the issue. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee warned that, "In the name of No Child Left Behind, we are going to leave some of our brightest students totally behind by never touching their talents to sing, paint, act, dance, or play an instrument."

### **Two Ohio Communities Consider Second Attempts to Pass Arts Ballots**

In Cleveland, Cuyahoga County may consider a 30 cent-per-pack cigarette tax hike to provide operating support for local nonprofit arts organizations. The tax has the potential to generate \$20 million annually for the arts. A different arts ballot initiative to increase property taxes failed narrowly with 46 percent of the vote in 2004.

In November 2006, the Akron School Board will try to get a levy ballot passed to restore arts education programs. Following a narrow 700-vote defeat of the first ballot on May 2, the school board was forced to propose deep cuts to next year's budget. Recommendations include cutting all elementary school instrumental music programs, eight middle school drama coaches, 30 music directors, seven high school marching band assistant directors, and two visual and performing arts teachers.

**INSIDE:**

Building a Stronger Arts Movement	p 1
Congressional Arts Handbook Available	p 2
New York State Arts Budget Increases	p 2
Key Questions to Ask Candidates	p 2
Mayors Feature Arts in New Orleans	p 3
Election Watch 2006	p 4

**AMERICANS & ARTS ACTION FUND**  
 1000 Vermont Avenue NW • 6th Floor  
 Washington DC • 20005

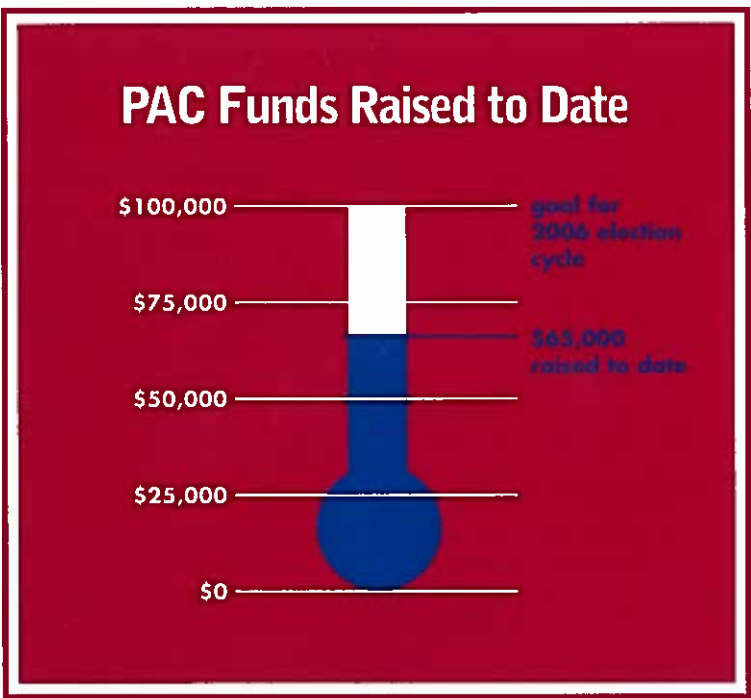
## Election Watch 2006

Throughout the coming months, Americans for the Arts Action Fund PAC will use this space to keep you informed about our efforts to help elect pro-arts candidates this fall. Here's a look at some of the important races impacting the arts.

Rep. Melissa Bean (D-IL) is a freshman representing the conservative 8th District in Illinois. Bean won an upset victory two years ago against longtime incumbent Rep. Phil Crane, a vocal opponent of public funding for the arts. We'll be supporting Rep. Bean's re-election bid this fall against David McSweeney, whose platform calls for a total freeze on national spending.

Two moderate republican, pro-arts candidates are in heated races in Connecticut. Both Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT) have galvanized republican support for public funding of the arts and have led the way in getting these amendments passed on the House floor.

As we continue to monitor congressional races, we are making critical decisions about candidates to support. That's why it's urgent that Arts Action Fund members like you join and contribute to our Action Fund PAC today at [www.ArtsActionFund.org/PAC](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org/PAC). Thank you.



## About Us

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Americans for the Arts, engaging citizens in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in the arts. Arts Action Fund members are citizen activists who are committed to helping make certain that arts-friendly public policies are adopted at every level of government and in the private sector. *Arts Action News* is delivered four times a year exclusively to supporters of the Arts Action Fund.