

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2021

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce,

We thank the Subcommittee for its steadfast bipartisan support of our federal cultural agencies. In that tradition, we respectfully request at least \$176 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Interior Appropriations bill.

The arts are a powerful force in our communities. As the nation's largest single funder of the nonprofit arts sector, the NEA expands opportunities for Americans to engage with the arts in every state and district, supporting an average of 2,400 projects annually. This grantmaking often targets rural and underserved areas that would not otherwise have access to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of the arts.

Few other federal investments have such widespread and multiplying effects as those of the NEA. For every dollar spent on direct grants, nine dollars in private and other public funds are leveraged, generating more than \$500 million in matching support. Moreover, 40 percent of NEA's grant-making budget is re-granted through state arts agencies and regional arts organizations. Private support cannot substitute the leveraging role of government cultural funding.

Robust funding for the NEA is even more important as cultural organizations and their workers continue to experience the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. By one measure, financial losses to the nonprofit arts and culture sector are an estimated \$16 billion as of April 2021. At the height of the pandemic in 2020, more than 60 percent of creative professionals had experienced unemployment. Sustained federal investment in the arts is vital to restoring the sector and supporting its dedicated workforce.

The NEA is also at the forefront of the effort to build a national network of care for our injured service members, whether they are active duty or veterans, in medical treatment or transitioning back home to their bases and communities. The Creative Forces Military Healing Arts Network focuses support for

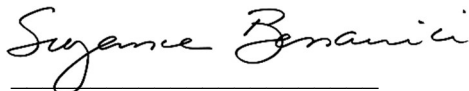
service members and veterans who have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health conditions. This program includes 11 clinical sites across the country and a telehealth program for patients in rural and remote areas. It represents an important partnership between the NEA, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, and state and local community arts organizations; and, it is committed to advancing research and building a national network of care in both clinical and community settings benefiting our injured service members, veterans, and their families.

Additionally, the requested funding would allow the NEA to maintain its slate of enormously successful national programs, including *The Big Read*, *Blue Star Museums*, *The Mayors' Institute on City Design*, *The Citizens Institute on Rural Design*, *Shakespeare in American Communities*, and *Poetry Out Loud*.

The arts are also a critical part of well-rounded education, and access is essential for equity. Students with an education rich in the arts have higher GPAs and graduation rates. The NEA's education programs have provided support for arts education in local communities, which has helped to close the education achievement gap and benefit children and adults in many important ways throughout their lives.

We strongly urge you to support at least \$176 million for NEA in the Fiscal Year 2022 Interior Appropriations bill. By approving this level of funding, you will maintain the NEA's ability to make access to the arts a reality for more Americans. We appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



SUZANNE BONAMICI
Member of Congress



ELISE STEFANIK
Member of Congress

Funding of National Endowment for the Arts in FY 2022

Fiscal Year 2022 Signatories - April 30, 2021

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Colin Allred
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

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Hakeem Jeffries
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Deborah Ross
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Dina Titus
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Jeff Van Drew
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Marc Veasey
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Nikema Williams
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Frederica S. Wilson
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John Yarmuth
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Don Young
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