

**E-mail sent to U.S. House Members from Representative  
Jim Langevin (RI) and the speeches made:**

**Special Order this Thursday, 4-6-17: Protecting the  
National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities  
First Hour Following Votes on Thursday**

*Share stories of the impact of the Endowments in your district*

Dear Colleague:

During the first hearings on legislation that would eventually create the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, Senator Claiborne Pell, one of Rhode Island's finest statesman and a mentor of mine, said: "I believe that this cause and its implementation has a worldwide application; for as our cultural life is enhanced and strengthened, so does it project itself into the world beyond our shores. Let us apply renewed energies to the very concept we seek to advance: a true renaissance—the reawakening, the quickening, and above all, the unstunted growth of our cultural vitality."

Within two years, President Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act into law, and for over fifty years, both NEA and NEH have fulfilled the vision Senator Pell articulated.

Unfortunately, that vision is now under attack. In the President's "America First Budget Blueprint," he has expressed a desire to eliminate both Endowments and remove funding from the many projects they support. I have seen firsthand the cultural impact NEA and NEH dollars have in Rhode Island, and I will be hosting a Special Order this Thursday, immediately following last votes, for Members to come share their stories of support for these venerable institutions. You can learn more about the impacts in your community from Americans for the Arts' [creative industries reports](#).

Please let Nick Leiserson ([nick.leiserson@mail.house.gov](mailto:nick.leiserson@mail.house.gov)) in my office know if you have any questions, or if you'd like to participate.

Sincerely,

Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress

Below are the speeches from April 6, 2017, special order debate in the U.S. House. Representatives Langevin (RI), Price (NC), Pascrell (NJ), Cicilline (RI), Adams (NC), Tonko (NY), and Foster (IL) each spoke.

The discussion begins on p.14 of the PDF (H2770) to p.21 (H2777) at this linked PDF document: <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2017/04/06/CREC-2017-04-06.pdf>; however, it is also copied below for if you want to read what they had to say in support of the NEA and NEH.

#### FUND THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Faso). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. Langevin) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join a number of my colleagues in strong support of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. These venerable institutions, which both recently celebrated their 50th anniversaries, are a cornerstone of American cultural expressions. Sadly, they are also under attack.

The President's recent budget outline called for the defunding and dismantling of the Endowments. So I have gathered here with my friends and colleagues in the hope that we can help the President change his mind and demonstrate to him the immense benefit that the NEA and the NEH bring to our districts, our country, and, in fact, the world.

Being a Rhode Islander, I have always felt a special connection to the arts and humanities. Rhode Island was founded as a colony that welcomed free expression of religion, and that freedom of thought quickly translated into an independent mindedness that drove creative endeavors. It is no wonder, then, that into such an environment was born one of the 20th century's great statesmen and a champion of the arts, our late senior Senator, Senator Claiborne Pell.

Senator Pell was a mentor of mine, and I actually had the privilege of interning with him twice at one point. He is rightly lionized for many of his legislative achievements, including the Pell grants that bear his name. But I believe that no issue was closer to his heart than that of preserving and promoting American art and culture.

Anyone who knew the Senator knew that his own passion was reflected and redoubled by his wife, the indomitable Nuala Pell, one of the great supporters of the arts that my State and our country has ever seen. The National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities can trace their beginnings to the passions of the Pells, the vision of President Kennedy, and the determination of President Johnson.

President Kennedy began his term with a focus on American culture, when he invited Robert Frost to read a poem at his inauguration. He soon followed this up by appointing August Heckscher his Special Consultant on the Arts. Heckscher's report entitled, ``The Arts and the National Government,'' led to the creation of the President's Advisory Council on the Arts.

Meanwhile, Senator Pell, the chairman of the Senate Special Subcommittee on the Arts and Humanities, was hard at work. He began his first hearing in 1963 with this statement: ``I believe that this cause and its implementation has a worldwide application; for as our cultural

life is enhanced and strengthened, so does it project itself into the world beyond our shores. Let us apply renewed energies to the very concept we seek to advance: a true renaissance--the reawakening, the quickening, and above all, the unstinted growth of our cultural vitality.'

So over the next 2 years, working with legislators including Senators Hubert Humphrey and Jacob Javits and Representatives Frank Thompson and William Moorhead, Senator Pell crafted President Kennedy's vision into a reality. With the full support and assistance of President Johnson, the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act was signed into law on September 29, 1965.

The first Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, incidentally, was another Rhode Islander, Barnaby Keeney, then president of Brown University.

Mr. Speaker, I begin this hour with a survey of history for a couple of reasons. First, I think that it is vital that both Members and the President understand the care and consideration that went into creating the Endowments. So years of deliberation by some of our finest legislators went into the determination made in the arts and said:

While primarily a matter for private and local initiative, the arts and humanities are also appropriate matters of concern of the Federal Government.

So there is no doubt that private foundation and corporate philanthropy are the bedrock of artistic funding in this country. Nonetheless, there is an important role for government at all levels to play, and the Endowment serves as the catalyst for governmental involvement.

Second, looking back helps remind us of the aspirations that drove the creation of the Endowments in the first place. Last week, we learned of the death of Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a Soviet poet who defied his totalitarian government. When President Kennedy brought poetry to his inauguration, it was in direct contrast to the Soviet Union, where literary dissidents were imprisoned or exiled and not given freedom to create.

What a message to send to the world in the 1960s, that the United States prized artistic expression, celebrated scholarly inquiry, and believed in the strength and progress embodied by multiculturalism. So the playwright in New York was not censored. He was cheered. A historian in North Carolina was greeted not with accusation, but acclaim. The painter in Nevada was not imprisoned; she was empowered.

Placed in context, the message sent by the creation of the Endowments was that America's culture was not just an asset to be protected, but a powerful tool for promoting freedom worldwide.

Just as importantly, the 1965 act recognized that American culture was not static. Rather, its evolution over time was the source of its power. However, I believe the most important reason to begin with the history of the Endowments can be found in the Arts and Humanities Act itself: ``An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.''

Why do we study the arts and humanities? Why do we promote them in the Halls of Congress? ``To achieve a better understanding of the past,

a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.''

Mr. Speaker, I co-chair the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus, a caucus that owes its very name to the work of an artist, William Gibson, who first coined the phrase ``cyberspace'' in 1984. Gibson helped create the lexicon that we use today to describe the internet as we know it and, in so doing, helped to shape its development and growth--a better view of the future, indeed.

For years, I promoted the STEM to STEAM movement, the concept of adding art and design to the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Incidentally, this movement is another product of my home State, courtesy of the brilliant minds at the Rhode Island School of Design, in particular, as I understand it, then former President John Maeda, who, as I understand, coined the term ``STEM to STEAM.''

Incorporating principles of art and design in STEM helps foster creativity, encourages collaboration, and can engender sudden, inspired breakthroughs, all by helping to better analyze the present.

So in my role in the Armed Services and Homeland Security Committees, I am presented daily with new threats brought on by the advent of new technologies or fast-moving global events. The temptation to act quickly is strong, and sometimes immediate reaction is warranted; but more often than not, it is through examination of the past that I find a path forward.

These United States have weathered many crises over the centuries--some of our own making--but by better understanding of them, I can better analyze the present and better see a future of America peaceful, prosperous, and free.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues have stories to tell of the great works that the NEA and NEH have supported in their districts, and I will share some of those stories as well. But I hope my words on the history of the Endowments have helped shape our understanding of their incredible purpose and ideals of President Kennedy, President Johnson, Senator Pell, and their colleagues.

America is better for the Endowments existing. The world is better for it. To cast them away in a budget outline that zeros them out without even a word of justification is a tragedy.

It dismisses the ideals of our forbearers as insignificant. It ignores the half century of work that many of my colleagues here have done to promote our culture through the Endowments. And in the cruelest of ironies, it does so without engaging with the very disciplines it dismisses as unneeded. It cannot and will not go unchallenged.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Price). The gentleman has co-led this effort with me, and he proudly co-chairs the Caucus on the Humanities.

**Mr. PRICE** of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding and for taking up this Special Order to focus on the role of the Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities in American life and the need for us in this body to have some historical perspective and appreciation of that, and to rise to the occasion of the challenge presented by the Trump preliminary budget to make certain that these efforts are appreciated, and, more importantly, that they are funded, that they are supported in this body and in our budget for fiscal 2018.

I am glad that the gentleman took some time to give us a history

lesson. He comes by this advocacy honestly because he is the Representative from Rhode Island. The inspiration behind the Endowments, back in the 1960s, was Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, a towering figure in the Senate.

I suppose I am one of the few Members around here who has been around long enough to remember Claiborne Pell. I never served with him, but I was a young staff member in the U.S. Senate when Claiborne Pell was going strong.

I first got a job as a summer intern and then returned summer after summer. I ended up writing a dissertation out of the Senate office of Senator Bob Bartlett of Alaska who was a friend and collaborator of Claiborne Pell's.

Pell had many things going. I remember his chairman, Senator Lister Hill of Alabama. When I interviewed him at one point, he remarked on Claiborne and how just Claiborne had everything going. You had to really work to keep up with him.

But these Endowments were favorite projects of Claiborne Pell and of that uniquely fertile period in the history of this Congress when these efforts were pioneered and established, and, of course, they have enriched our national life ever since.

As the gentleman from Rhode Island mentioned, I have been honored to co-chair the Congressional Humanities Caucus. I have also been a member for a long time of the Congressional Arts Caucus.

It is at least in part in that capacity I speak out today in defense of these Endowments, but also as a U.S. citizen, as a former academic who appreciates the role both of these Endowments play in supporting academic life and research into our history, our culture, our national background.

And not just research at the very top levels of our great universities, although they do some of that, but also the kind of local historical understanding that is developed through local arts councils and through local groups who research history and put on pageants and who educate young people and who do so much to enrich our national life from the bottom up.

One of the strengths, I think, of both the Arts and the Humanities Endowments, maybe their greatest strength, is their grassroots character--how they work to make history and the arts real and tangible and meaningful to young people coming along and to our local communities.

That is one reason their political support is so strong and so broad in terms of the political spectrum. We all know there have been times in the past where opportunistic politicians took out after the arts and the humanities thinking that maybe they could get a point or two by pretending to be antielitist or something like that. Efforts fall flat because Members of this body and most Americans know that the Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities operate at anything other than an elitist fashion.

They have managed to, at one and the same time, support the great achievements of our top research institutions but also to fund all sorts of activity at the local level, to the grassroots level, that has enriched our understanding of who we are and where we came from.

There was a Commission on the Humanities organized by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences a few years ago. It was co-chaired by the distinguished president of Duke University, Dick Brodhead, and a prominent businessman, John Rowe. The heart of the matter is the report that they produced. I would recommend to colleagues that report. It is

not a report designed to gather dust on a shelf. It is a report designed to be an action document to help us understand that the humanities in this country are an important part of our educational excellence. They are an important part of our competitiveness internationally.

The humanities are important to national security and to the business world in terms of languages and cultural understanding and the kind of historical perspective that people need to operate in the modern world.

We all have our stories about how the humanities have enriched our lives and given us understanding. I experience that every day, not in a direct application necessarily but some kind of appreciation of where we have come from historically. What is the validity of some of these ideological arguments that we hear? What is the history of our institution and of our role at critical moments? There is so much, whatever your walk of life, whether you are a Member of Congress or a businessperson or whatever. You are not going to get an instant history when you need it, when you need to have that understanding and that perspective. You gain this only by virtue of your educational background and what is available to you in terms of resources to deepen your understanding, and then you draw on that later, and it is extremely important to have that to draw on.

We need to situate ourselves, in this body especially, situate ourselves historically and understand the challenges we face. A broad liberal arts education is simply irreplaceable as a way of doing that. There are no more effective champions of broad liberal arts education and all of its facets than the Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities.

They have a robust system of partnerships with State agencies, local leaders, and the philanthropic sector. I particularly appreciate, in my district, the Carolina Ballet; the North Carolina Symphony, which gave a wonderful performance at the Kennedy Center as part of a series to celebrate State orchestras last week; and the National Humanities Center in my district also, a home for first-rate research in the humanities where scholars come year in and year out.

There is an economic impact that is sometimes not fully appreciated. A recent analysis by the Bureau of Economic Analysis found that our Nation's arts and cultural capacity produces over \$700 billion in economic output and supports millions of jobs.

Coming down to specific programs, in fiscal year 2016 alone, the Endowment for the Humanities museums grants leveraged \$33 million into an additional \$104 million. That is a pretty good return, quite a return, for the American taxpayer.

In fact, every dollar that the State Humanities Council gives out in grants, since fiscal year 2015, leveraged at least \$5 at the local and State level.

There are all kinds of reasons for us to appreciate the arts and the humanities--the ways they enrich our lives, the kind of ways they equip this country and this country's young people to be insightful, to be creative, to think outside the box, to develop their skills to the fullest extent for their own good and also for the good of our country.

In the face of all this, how can it be that the preliminarily budget of the Trump administration proposes eliminating these time-tested and productive programs?

I don't believe that will stand. I don't believe Members of either party in this body will let it stand. The funding already is very modest for these institutions. I am not talking about meeting the Trump

administration halfway. I am talking about restoring full funding for the Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities and standing up proudly for these institutions and understanding and furthering understanding of the role they play in our national life.

Where did this proposal come from? I know where it came from--an outside rightwing think tank. That is the only credential that I know that this proposal from the preliminary budget has. I hope and believe that this was an overly hasty inclusion in that preliminary budget based on nothing more than this think tank's proposal.

I know it is up for reconsideration, I hope by the administration itself, but certainly by this body, as we put together our budget for 2018 and also our appropriations bills for the year.

We have got to stand up for our institutions' prerogatives in this case, but exercise those prerogatives on behalf of our own constituents, our own communities, and two of the finest and most efficient and most effective uses of Federal funds that are in the whole budget, the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities.

Let's hold fast in our investment. It is one of the most efficient we make in terms of leveraging private, nonprofit, and corporate dollars. It is one of the very most effective in enriching our national life.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend again for taking up this Special Order. I am happy to work with him on this, and we will count on a cooperative effort going forward.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his outstanding comments, his insights, and his leadership on the arts and humanities issues. As co-chair of the Humanities Caucus here in the Congress, I appreciate his efforts in helping me organize and colead this effort to speak out against the effort to zero out the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities budget. We hope it will not stand, and we hope that the President will reconsider his initial budget proposal.

I am proud to yield to a number of my colleagues and want to begin with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Pascrell), no shrinking violet himself, someone who is artistic and colorful in his own right, but it is no surprise to me that being from New Jersey he would be here since it was one of his late colleagues, the former Congressman from New Jersey, Frank Thompson, who was the House sponsor of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act.

**Mr. PASCRELL.** Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. I want to associate myself with the comments of the gentleman from Rhode Island and the gentleman from North Carolina.

As a former teacher, I have seen firsthand how important the arts and humanities are in educating our kids and bettering society as a whole.

It has been shown that exposure to the arts stimulates students' learning, their motivation, and their creativity.

Those students involved in the arts score significantly higher in the SATs than other students. Now, more than ever, the arts often seem to be one of the first programs cut from a school or a government budget.

In fact, this President has proposed eliminating both the Endowments entirely--the first time any President has proposed such a measure. This has been supported by Democrats and Republicans because it is meaningful to the entire Republic.

The NEA, the National Endowment for the Arts, has already sustained significant budget reductions. The NEA appropriation is 12 percent lower than it was in 2010. It declined to \$19.5 million.

And while I understand, when everything is a priority, nothing is a priority, I understand that this priority affects the spirit of the greatest Nation in the world.

The importance of arts and humanities is not something we should even forget, even in the face of tough economic times. The arts support 4.7 million full-time United States jobs and, as you have heard, creates billions in economic activity each year.

In New Jersey, the National Endowment for the Arts last year provided over \$1 million in direct grant funding to 13 arts organizations, community groups, schools, and artists, as well as enabled the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to award 171 grant and nongrant services totalling over \$13 million. So there are consequences and a ripple effect to the few Federal dollars that are provided and targeted.

In my hometown of Paterson, New Jersey, the Council for the Humanities has awarded grant funding to the Hamilton Partnership for Paterson in support of their work for the Great Falls National Historical Park.

Humanities organizations like these enrich the cultural and historical benefits of the Great Falls through programming and community involvement initiatives. That is why it is crucial that we ensure that they receive the funding and the recognition they deserve.

The budget proposal does damage to Americans across the board. One area taking a massive hit, if I may use a parallel, is health care. This budget would cripple the NIH, the National Institutes of Health, slashing funding by \$5.8 billion, equal to 19 percent of the current \$30.8 billion discretionary budget. The budget takes aim at vital antipoverty programs that directly impact health care because poverty causes poor health. So our physical health is going to take a toll.

But it is our mental health that could be improved through a strong arts foundation, helping to relieve stresses and lift American spirits. Spiritual health of Americans, supported by the NEA and the NEH, is a key piece of our overall well-being.

As an active member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I have spent years opposing those who wanted to slash funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities.

I will continue to work with my colleagues--and I pledge to you today that I will--on these Federal initiatives that possess widespread and bipartisan support.

Democrats and Republicans have always come together on this issue. It lifts our spirit as a culture and a nation. You mentioned Yevtushenko before, a Russian poet who came to New York City in the fifties. I only know a few words in Russian, but I went anyway because he was going to read his poetry in Russian. There was no interpreter there.

Yevtushenko had been in the midst of the Russian Revolution. He had been in the midst of people trying to gain a voice. I just know a few words; nonetheless, I was moved by his spirit, like watching a painting or looking at a photograph or going to a movie. I understand without knowing the words. That is what a poem should be. It should be, regardless of meaning, in any language. Whether it is music, art, poetry, sculpture, cinema, photography, dance, it doesn't matter.

This is the heart of America. Our children are drawn to it. And we even use art and the humanities now to help those people through very

distressing times, which is very interesting and fascinating.

So I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. Langevin) for yielding. I want him to know he has a partner. Once I partner, you know I am not going to go away.

I also thank those who did stay to speak about this very critical issue.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** Mr. Speaker, I know everyone is on a tight time schedule, but I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Pascrell) for staying and contributing his thoughts and his support to this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. Cicilline). I know that he is on a tight schedule to try to catch a train at noon.

**Mr. CICILLINE.** Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for convening this Special Order hour and for his incredible leadership on this issue of the importance of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, not only here in Congress, but for what the gentleman does back in Rhode Island to ensure that all Rhode Islanders have the ability to experience and enjoy the beauty of the arts and culture in our great State.

As the gentleman knows, and I am sure he has referenced, we come from the State of the late Senator Claiborne Pell, the founder of the National Endowment for the Arts. So we feel a special privilege, and it is a great honor to stand and defend this great institution. As has been mentioned, art not only nourishes our soul, but it makes us more human and creates beauty in the world.

We have had a number of events recently in Rhode Island where we have brought in invited artists and people who enjoy art to speak about what the impact might mean if we defunded the National Endowment for the Arts. There were so many beautiful words that were shared by a young woman who said: Art helped me find my voice.

And she described kind of what her life had been before she became an artist.

We know the economic impact of the arts. In my congressional district, there are 1,340 arts-related businesses that employ almost 7,000 people. We spend in this country a very modest amount, .004 percent, so four one-thousandths of 1 percent is the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts. So it is a very modest budget.

Forty percent of the programming for the National Endowment for the Arts supports activities in high-poverty areas. So the contributions it makes are enormous to our economy. For every dollar that is invested in the arts, it yields \$51 in economic activity. So there are tremendous economic benefits to this.

In addition to that, as was referenced by Representative Price from North Carolina, arts, culture, and creativity are essential parts of the job skills for the 21st century. People want to employ people who are entrepreneurial, creative, problem-solving; and arts and music are some of the best vehicles to develop those skills.

So it is something which is important to the future economy of our country, to the kind of civilization that we will be a part of. It adds to the lives of everyone that we will represent.

I thank Representative Langevin for giving me an opportunity to reinforce the importance of funding the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. It makes all the difference in the world to the kind of art experiences people have in

this country. We invest a very modest amount of money, and it yields so much more that it is hard to imagine America without the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Rhode Island (Mr. Langevin) for leading this effort and for convening this Special Order hour.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman Cicilline from Rhode Island for his comments and also for his partnership in helping to support the arts and humanities back home in Rhode Island and in our country as a whole. As the gentleman said, we have a special connection to the arts and humanities, given the leadership of our late senior Senator Claiborne Pell who created the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities in the first place, along with the support of his wife, Nuala Pell, who David and I both know very well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. Adams).

**Ms. ADAMS.** Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. Langevin) for his dedication to the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for organizing this Special Order today.

As the 12th Congressional District Representative from North Carolina, as a practicing professional artist, as an arts educator, a curator, and a retired 40-year visual arts professor, I am pleased to join with all of my colleagues expressing my support for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. I want to associate myself with the previous comments made by my colleagues from North Carolina and New Jersey as well.

I have learned throughout my professional arts education and arts management careers that, yes, the arts are nice; but beyond being nice, they are absolutely necessary and essential to enriching our lives.

Artists connect the past to the present. They convey our unique experiences. And they are presented in many forms, sometimes familiar and other times unfamiliar.

A universal language, the arts speak to people everywhere to help them understand diversity and cultures and some of the most complicated issues.

The arts and humanities are critical for adding value to our shared culture. They are not just used to mark celebrations, but to challenge perceptions of society.

Museums function as tools to house and preserve our collective history as a nation and bind us together as one community. Visual artists reflect on our society and they force us to reconcile our past. Writers record history and expose and challenge readers to different ideals presented in our society. Musicians transcend social and cultural boundaries to connect the listener through the sound of their instruments.

Time and time again, we have made a conscious decision to fund the arts and the humanities, signaling that we intrinsically value the arts as being crucial to our collective identity.

The NEA and the NEH have been and continue to be necessary to the success of the arts and humanities in my home State of North Carolina. As a Representative of Charlotte, one of the largest cities in the South, I understand how important the NEA and the NEH is to Charlotte's unique and thriving art culture.

In 2016, the NEA invested \$60,000 in grants in Charlotte for programs such as the Children's Theatre of Charlotte Inc.'s performance of the ``Journey to Oz'' and the McColl Center for Art and Innovation's exhibition and residency featuring Latino and Hispanic artists. NEA grants make these cultural events possible not just in my State, but in States throughout this Nation.

The arts not only provide entertainment, but they also encourage us to think critically. Advocates and researchers have shown that the arts have a positive impact on a young person's development. And because of this understanding, the arts and music were included in the Every Student Succeeds Act as part of a well-rounded education.

The NEA is a critical component to ensuring strong arts education in our schools. Through direct grants, the NEA is able to support crucial preschool through 12th grade education projects.

By establishing partnerships with our colleges and universities, the NEA is able to engage with our institutions of higher learning to provide necessary grants to preserve and restore historic works of art.

As a college art professor, I had the privilege of working with the NEA to secure a matching grant, which allowed the college to preserve and restore a historic painting by Aaron Douglas, the father of the Harlem Renaissance.

In order to continue to ensure that our students remain competitive in a global society, we must continue to fund the arts.

In addition to the cultural and educational impact of the arts, they play an important role in helping our veterans transition to civilian life and combat physical and mental illnesses. Through the NEA Military Healing Arts Partnership, the NEA has worked with the Department of Defense to create an art therapy program to treat servicemembers with traumatic brain injuries and associated psychological health issues at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. This program places art therapy at the center of a multidisciplinary treatment approach.

Through art therapy, our brave servicemen and -women are able to receive specialized treatment that enable them to heal both their physical and their mental wounds. Participants in the program have found relief and have seen vast improvements in sleep, communication, pain, and their ability to confront emotional challenges. This program has also invested in critical research on the impacts and the benefits of this treatment.

The NEA's budget for fiscal year 2017 was \$148 million, just .004 percent of the Federal budget, a small amount.

Through a relatively small investment in the arts, we are able to yield large returns. Not only do the arts serve us culturally in terms of being significant, but the nonprofit arts and the cultural sector is an economic driver, supporting about 4.13 million jobs and contributing to a gross domestic product of 4.2 percent, or about \$729 billion.

The arts are crucial. They are critical to our culture. They are crucial to our education and to our economy. And in all respects, it is the arts that make us human. So funding for NEA and the NEH must remain in the Federal budget.

I would urge my colleagues to support us in that effort to keep the arts as a viable part of our budget, which means that it will be a viable part of our communities.

I thank the gentleman so much for putting together this Special Order and for allowing me to have input today.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** I thank the gentlewoman for her presence here today

but, most especially, for her outstanding words and participation in this effort. Thank you for what you have contributed here today, your wonderful perspective. I hope it catches the President's attention and, hopefully, reverses this effort to zero out funding for the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities.

Mr. Speaker, some may think of the arts and humanities as just luxuries or extras, but they are not. They are central to who we are. It is also about the jobs they create and how the artists and the folks from the humanities contribute to our economy, people who earn a living and pay taxes and, again, are a vibrant part of our communities, our States, and our country. So that is something else that is important to remember.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud now to yield to my colleague from New York (Mr. Tonko), who has an important perspective to offer.

**Mr. TONKO.** Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for yielding. Thank you, Representative Langevin, for leading us in this hour, and also for your great leadership on behalf of the arts and humanities.

I am very pleased to join my colleagues in taking this time to speak about the critical importance of the National Endowment for the Arts, NEA, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, NEH.

Any great civil society will grow even stronger by embracing the arts and humanities, and certainly America, when she embraces the arts and the humanities, grows to the greatest potential; so the greatness of America is reflected by that interest and that investment.

At a time when some are arguing that we must cut our way to success, I would remind them that investments in the arts and in humanities are investments in our workforce and in our economy. I fully support funding for these programs.

The National Endowment for the Arts provides a foundation for America's artistic excellence, her creativity, and innovation that benefits individuals, communities, and our industries.

As NEA Chair Jane Chu once said: ``Although many may not realize it, the arts actively intersect with areas such as the economy, human development, and community vitality.''

The NEA, as a strong sponsor of the arts and artists, is an integral source of strength at these intersections, challenging students to turn imaginative ideas into brilliant solutions for generations to come.

Art in our communities, and especially in our schools, is indeed vital. It is one of the most important ways that we celebrate our unique regional heritage and expand our own horizons of creativity and innovation.

In the capital region of New York, the area that I am so proud to represent, we value the arts. So much of our artistic achievement would not be possible without the National Endowment for the Arts.

For many years, the Albany Symphony Orchestra has received NEA grants in support of the American Music Festival.

The Arts Center of the Capital Region has received NEA grants for exhibitions, workshops, and master classes.

Yaddo has been the recipient of many NEA grants to support residencies for collaborative teams.

Fence magazine uses NEA grants for publication of books of poetry and podcasts.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was just awarded an NEA grant for residencies to create works investigating the intersection of art,

media, technology, and, yes, science.

Without the NEA, these programs would not be there to enrich our communities and our lives.

National Endowment for the Humanities awards also support research and innovation, strengthen critical thinking and writing skills, as well as strengthen humanities education in all institutions of learning.

Supporting the growth of the humanities in our communities is just as essential. The National Endowment for the Humanities has contributed in many ways to the capital region, which has a very rich history and heritage worthy of preservation, promotion, and celebration.

Many of our institutes of higher education have benefited from these grants, including RPI, Skidmore, Union College, and SUNY Albany, to name a few.

Some of the projects that have been funded by NEH include the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, which explores the complex relationship between the Underground Railroad, the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction in our region, as well as the influence of these events on our contemporary society.

Investments in the humanities also drive us to be better citizens. NEH has supported the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, which is working toward the celebration of women's right to vote and the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters in New York State to celebrate the upcoming events commemorating the women's suffrage centennial.

Grant recipients include the Girl Scouts, the Troy Boys and Girls Club, libraries, museums, high schools, and elementary schools. Our history reminds us of the pride that comes with developing community and neighborhood, investments that those who came before us made in growing families, developing households, building neighborhoods in powerful and meaningful ways.

This conversation is also closely linked to two other important fields that are intertwined with the arts and humanities. First, I am a longtime supporter of America's heritage areas, special places that have played important roles in shaping our Nation. They tell the stories of people and communities, the pioneer spirit of which laid the foundations of our society.

Heritage areas provide enormous economic benefits, and I greatly appreciate the work that the Erie Canalway and Hudson Valley heritage areas have done for upstate New York. As the co-chair of the Congressional National Heritage Area Caucus, I continue to be impressed by how the entire National Heritage Areas program operates on a very small budget. These cost-effective programs create jobs and grow our local economies.

In fact, each Federal dollar invested in this program leverages more than \$5 in non-Federal funds. That is exactly the kind of smart investing we need to see more of.

By the way, thank you to the 77 Members who joined me in supporting funding for heritage areas.

I am also supporting funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services because museums are a vital part of our communities and educational infrastructure. These museums collectively employ 400,000 Americans and have an impact of \$20 billion in their communities.

During my time in Congress, I have been a steadfast advocate for our Nation's museums, and I have urged my colleagues to robustly fund the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the primary agency that

supports our Nation's 33,000 museums. It is highly accountable, and its great competitive, peer-reviewed grants programs serve all States.

This year, we had 166 Members signing on to that letter. So it is very obvious, NEH, NEA, IMLS, and National Heritage Areas are fundamental investments in our communities. They make life richer, more meaningful; they inspire us; they challenge us. They need to be funded. Let's move forward with the critical funding they require and deserve.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** I thank the gentleman from New York for his comments and for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Ferguson). The gentleman from Rhode Island has approximately 12 minutes remaining.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield now to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Foster).

**Mr. FOSTER.** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for yielding and for leading this important conversation.

We come here today to call attention to a misguided turn that this administration proposes to take in our country's cultural history.

I am the only Ph.D physicist in Congress, so I frequently come to the floor to speak out in defense of science and scientific research, but I am here today for another reason, to call attention to the grave threat that

President Trump's budget poses to the future of our country's arts and culture.

What is it that makes a country great; and how will our country be viewed a generation from now, a century from now, or in the next millennia?

To answer this question, we can only look to the great nations of the past. Why was Athens great in a way that Sparta never was?

Why is Florence, under the Medici, revered and remembered in a way that its forgotten competitors never are?

It is because, after they defended their homeland, after they conquered their rivals in war, after they triumphed in commerce, those countries invested a significant fraction of their national wealth in things that had nothing to do with material conquest.

The Medici supported the science and the art of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and the Renaissance masters; and Athens supported the immortal accomplishments of the Greek storytellers, historians, artists, and philosophers, and that is what made them great.

For many decades, our country has supported the arts and humanities through the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. Now our President has proposed a budget that would cut these Endowments completely in favor of more defense spending and a useless wall on our southern border.

The National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities provide critical funding for students and organizations throughout the country, including in my district in Illinois. His budget proposes that we wipe them away completely. These cuts might make the President feel like a hero in the short term, but they will be a disaster for our country's place in human history.

Programs that support understanding of the arts and humanities play a vital role in our society. They give us knowledge and a shared cultural base that we rely on every day, regardless of what career we go into. And they also help children and students of all ages embrace the

complexity and the wonder of humanity.

History, literature, and the arts connect us to a common past and allow us to explore our differences and to understand places beyond our own imaginations. Simply put, the arts and humanities teach us how to be compassionate and understanding toward other people. This is what makes America truly great.

The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities help show us what it means to be human because, regardless of who you are and what you do, knowledge, empathy, and compassion are the national values and the human values that we need to defend, not with bombs and fighter jets, but with sustained support and the cultivation of knowledge and culture.

Now, for most of my career in science, I worked at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory. The founding director of Fermilab, Robert Wilson, spoke eloquently about this over 40 years ago. Bob was a physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project and who walked away from his security clearance and dedicated his life to pure science, to building giant accelerators, experiments, international collaborations at Fermilab to explore the fundamental properties of matter.

He was also an artist who, after he made all of the magnets and particle accelerators, then filled his laboratory with graceful and imaginative art.

In 1969, he was called to testify in front of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy to answer why it was that we were spending all of this money at Fermilab during the Cold War and what all this had to do with the national defense.

Robert Wilson looked the committee in the eye and said that all of the work at Fermilab, driven by natural human curiosity, has nothing at all to do with the national defense except, perhaps, to make our country more worth defending.

So I would hope that a President so bent on building his wall and increasing our defense budget by over \$50 billion, to the detriment of funding for education, science, and the arts, would pause for a moment and heed those words from history so that a century from now, when our children and grandchildren look back on this time in our country's history, they will see that the human values of our country were always what made it more worth defending, in part, because of the greatness that the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities have sustained for decades.

So I thank my colleague from Rhode Island for this important discussion.

**Mr. LANGEVIN.** I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his great comments and for his participation here today. It is very deeply impactful, and I am grateful.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Rhode Island has approximately 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I too have stories of the impact that the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities have back home, and some of these stories are small and deeply personal. I would like to thank the wonderful leaders of the Rhode Island Arts and Humanities Council for helping to collect them so that I can share them with everyone here today.

The State of Rhode Island is deeply indebted to Randy Rosenbaum and Dr. Elizabeth Francis for their work in promoting the arts and

humanities. The State councils are an essential component of the Endowments' efforts, and we are incredibly lucky in Rhode Island to have Elizabeth and Randy heading up our initiatives.

One of the stories they shared comes from FirstWorks, an NEA-supported organization that helps connect students experiencing new types of performance with artists premiering new pieces. FirstWorks recently helped bring together a Philadelphia hip-hop group with high school students in downtown Providence. The students participated in a workshop with one of the dancers one day and followed it up with a lecture and a matinee performance the next.

FirstWorks had just created a Spanish-language version of their student survey, which they administered after the matinee performance. Students were asked to rate their enjoyment and explain why they gave their answer. Two Spanish-speaking students responded that they loved the performance because it was ``the first time they went to one.''

The FirstWorks team weren't exactly sure what the students meant. Was it the first matinee? Was it the first time seeing the hip-hop group? So they followed up with the teacher, who wrote back: ``These students have never been to a live performance. It just goes to show you how important these opportunities are for our population. They will remember this forever.''

This is the kind of impact the arts can have on our communities.

Another story comes from an artist who has, with the help of State Arts Council funding, been working with underserved communities for 6 years. She helps students learn to apply themselves to art projects in a way that builds self-confidence and helps them learn the power of their imaginations. About an elementary school student named Danny, she wrote: ``When I first started working with him, he did nothing but whine and cry and insist he couldn't do anything. With my encouragement, he took his own ideas and went with them--in a puppet workshop, he made three stuffed animals instead. He sleeps with them every night now. They make him feel safe.''

There are hundreds of these stories in Rhode Island alone, and they would simply not be possible without the support of the Endowments.

Of course, some projects supported by NEA and NEH are on a much larger scale. It is virtually impossible right now to find a Rhode Islander who, today, doesn't know about WaterFire, Providence's massively successful creative placemaking project. I have experienced this wonderful WaterFire many times myself.

For those of my colleagues who have not had the pleasure of attending a WaterFire--and, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to extend an invitation to all of my colleagues to come and to visit--it is a dynamic sculpture, basically, with dozens of these metal baskets or metal braziers transforming the rivers of downtown Providence.

This groundbreaking artwork has completely transformed Saturday nights in Providence, with tens of thousands of people flocking downtown for each lighting and the performances, music, and camaraderie that accompany it. It is hard to describe it in words, but it has been transformative. WaterFire really has fundamentally altered the way Providence is viewed and the way the people of Providence view themselves. Support from NEA is helping WaterFire further explore creative placemaking, and it is incredibly meaningful.

A final thought to share comes from Professor Touba Ghadessi, a board member for the Rhode Island Council on the Humanities. Professor Ghadessi was asked to share her thoughts on why NEH matters for all Rhode Islanders, and I truly cannot improve upon her words. This is

what she had to say:

``The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities uncovers beautiful stories about individuals and places and brings them to life--these stories become our history and make us understand that we, too, write the narratives that construct culture. The intentionally diverse programming that RICH supports builds communities that, eventually, will view diversity as normalcy--this normalcy is the one I aspire to construct for the next generation. RICH allows for our best selves to come forward and celebrate together what culture teaches us--from the struggles of social justice, to the legacy of first peoples, to the craft of filmmaking for children. All of these things matter. All of these things make us better human beings. All of these things turn us into ethical and engaged citizens of the world. Without an understanding of the humanities, opinions become facts and truth is debatable. History has offered us a roadmap to behaving with integrity--we can't ignore it or ignorance wins.''

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of more important words for these times, and I would ask all of my colleagues to reflect on what it will take to view diversity as normalcy and why it seems today that the truth is debatable.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues for being here today. I am proud to share my thoughts on why it is so important that we not zero out the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities and the incredible impact they have on our communities.

I have one more story from my district about the impact of the arts and humanities that I'd like to share.

It, too, relates to the legacy of Senator Pell, but it also points to the broader cuts to arts and humanities in the President's budget outline.

A decade after the passage of the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities Act, Senator Pell was again at the forefront of cultural preservation and promotion when he sponsored legislation creating the Office of Museum Services.

While the Office was eventually rolled into the Institute of Museum and Library Services, it continues to support great work, which I saw firsthand last year in my district when the Tomaquag Museum in Exeter was awarded the prestigious National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Recently, we in Rhode Island have been celebrating the 350th anniversary of our charter and Roger Williams's respect for the Indigenous People he lived among.

But far too often, this story treats Rhode Island's tribes as bit players rather than delving into their rich culture and history.

The Tomaquag Museum's founders recognized this flaw in the narrative in the 1950s, and while I'm disappointed it took the rest of us so long to catch up, I'm incredibly proud of all the recognition it's received of late.

The Tomaquag Museum remains the only Rhode Island institution dedicated solely to the history and culture of the state's indigenous population, and I have experienced its power to start conversations and change attitudes in our communities.

Unfortunately, IMLS, too, is slated for defending under the President's budget outline.

We are very lucky that my home state Senator, Jack Reed, has taken up Senator Pell's mantle in pushing for its reauthorization and full funding.

But it is important that all of my colleagues join together to protect the NEA, the NEH, IMLS, and support for the arts and humanities throughout the federal budget.

We must do so because of the lives touched and forever altered by these organizations.

We must do so in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.

We must do so because it is good policy.

I hope that hearing the stories shared today has helped cement that fact in the minds of my colleagues, and I look forward to working with them to continue to promote the arts and humanities.

With that, I again thank all my colleagues who joined me this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.