

March 21, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Chairman 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 50 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 you to honor this legacy by rejecting any attempt by the Administration's budget proposal to eliminate or drastically cut the NEA and NEH. Instead we urge you to support funding of not less than \$149.8 million for each of the NEA and NEH for fiscal year 2018.

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 helped millions of young people grapple with the lessons of history.

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.

NEA and NEH serve as an important economic driver at the community level. The arts generate tourism and employ more than 4 million people in the creative industries nationally. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector is a \$704 billion industry, or 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP. The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$135 billion in economic activity annually and generates \$22.3 billion in government revenue. Arts and humanities education are critical to prepare our students for the innovative thinking required in the 21st century workplace. Finally, every federal dollar spent on arts initiatives sparks funding collaborations that leverage more than nine non-federal dollars from collaborations with private foundations.

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 more than 500 veterans. 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 program started at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and has now expanded to 11 other facilities across the country, including in Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Kentucky and Tennessee. A new telehealth site will soon extend the reach of the program to rural areas and other military facilities.

Thanks to your continued leadership, the NEA and NEH play a vital role in every state. We urge you to continue to support federal funding of the arts and humanities in fiscal year 2018 at a funding level of not less than \$149.8 million for each of NEA and NEH. 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,

Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Al Franken  
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

Joe Manchin  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Chris Murphy  
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

Tom Carper  
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Ed Markey  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Bob Menendez  
United States Senator