

March 8, 2016

Dear Member of Congress:

The Performing Arts Alliance (PAA) is pleased to be a National Partner of Arts Advocacy Day 2016. We join our fellow arts advocates in asking your support for policies recognizing the importance of the arts in America.

PAA is a multi-disciplinary coalition of national service organizations from the professional nonprofit performing arts field. We advocate for national policies that enhance and foster the contributions our sector makes to America. Our members include:

Alternate ROOTS	National Alliance for Musical Theatre
American Composers Forum	National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures
Association of Performing Arts Presenters	National Performance Network
Chamber Music America	Network of Ensemble Theaters
Chorus America	New Music USA
Dance/USA	OPERA America
Fractured Atlas	Theatre Communications Group
League of American Orchestras	

On behalf of our members and their audiences, we ask you to support the following actions:

Appropriate \$155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). NEA grants support education and arts programs in every congressional district. This federal investment places value on the role of arts and culture in our society. We celebrate the NEA's FY16 budget increase—the first since FY11; please support an increase in FY17.

Protect the full value and scope of the charitable deduction as you consider comprehensive tax reform. Support the nonprofit sector by standing against any changes to the charitable deduction which would hinder nonprofits' service to their communities, including arts organizations.

Appropriate \$30 million for the Assistance for Arts Education programs. The U.S. Department of Education's arts education grants have served over 230 congressional districts in 33 states. They have supported research-based models of arts learning for students and professional development for educators. The FY16 funding increase to arts education programs—the first since FY11—is encouraging; please support increased funding in FY17.

Improve access to arts education for all students by supporting the arts in ESSA implementation. In the new Every Student Succeeds Act, we celebrate the inclusion of the arts in the definition of "well-rounded subjects" as well as key provisions supporting access to arts education.

Enact the Arts Require Timely Service (ARTS) provision requiring U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to implement reasonable processing times, as required by law, for O and P petitions filed by or for U.S. nonprofit arts organizations. This provision has strong bipartisan backing and would support arts organizations that engage foreign guest artists in their educational and artistic programs.

Appropriate \$110 million to the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges. The Office's Cultural Programs Division focuses on cultural diplomacy by sending American artists abroad to share America's rich artistic traditions. The FY16 funding increase to the Office of Citizen Exchanges is encouraging; please support increased funding in FY17.

Sincerely,



Mario Garcia Durham
Chair, Performing Arts Alliance



Cristine Davis
General Manager, Performing Arts Alliance