STATEMENT OF CONCERN
ARTISTS, ENTREPRENEURS, AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The national arts community calls on Congress and the Administration to take steps to invest in the country's workforce and creative economy, to recognize artists, entrepreneurs, and nonprofit arts organizations as contributors to the small business community and support the creative economy through federal programs and actions.

- **Include cultural planning support through Economic Development Administration (EDA)**: Through the Commerce Department, the Economic Development Administration's Research, National, and Local Technical Assistance grant programs are essential to a community's thoughtful planning and economic development investment process. These programs should meet the increasing need for local cultural district planning and assisting municipalities with developing the creative economy in their communities.
- **Increase Cultural Facilities Support in Rural Development Program (USDA):** The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Housing & Community Facilities program funds the construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition of "essential facilities" which includes cultural facilities. Since its inception, about 9 percent ($108 million) of Community Facilities funding has been directed to education and cultural facilities—an amount that should be increased to address the infrastructure needs of rural cultural communities.
- **Make Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans Available:** Artists and performers often struggle to access the capital necessary to finance their small businesses. This proposal would require the SBA to work with lenders and regulators to ensure that loan program criteria do not discriminate against loans for arts-related businesses.
- **Ensure SBA Microloan Program Expansion:** This provision would direct the SBA to work with micro-lenders to develop loan criteria to ensure that artists and arts entrepreneurs have access to micro-lending.
- **Broaden SBA Technical Assistance Program:** Artists and performers, like other small business owners, often lack the resources and tools necessary for business planning and growth. This proposal would direct SBA to work with stakeholders to develop technical assistance programs targeted toward the specific needs of artists and arts entrepreneurs through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program.
- **Model New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program (Treasury):** New Markets tax credits are an effective tool to encourage private investment in underserved areas. However, utilizing NMTC to expand the creative and performing arts economy is challenging because few community development entities focus on the arts. This proposal will direct the Treasury to develop a model for arts economy community development entities (CDE) that allows for work in various low-income communities across the country.
- **Make Human Capital Investments in Arts Job Training (Labor):** The Department of Labor's Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs and Wagner-Peyser Act, which is administered by the states, "help up-skill workers and provide employment services and supports that will increase worker employability and earning power." Expanding the services available to workers in the creative sector and through arts institutions can provide increased professional development opportunities and training.
- **Increase Travel & Cultural Tourism (Commerce):** The Administration should increase the understanding of the value of travel and tourism at federal agencies through the Tourism Policy Council. By strengthening the content and demand for the touring consumer and increasing access to historic, natural, and cultural attractions, federal support can enhance an authentic travel experience in every one of our states and territories.
- **Utilize Immigrant Investor Program:** Direct the Immigrant Investor Program, also known as EB-5, created by Congress in 1990 to stimulate the U.S. economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors to support investment in the creative industries.