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Community Arts Partnership Act: Correspondence (1994): Correspondence 04

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April 22, 1994

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
335 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

On behalf of the American Arts Alliance and its six national nonprofit arts service organizations representing over 2,600 community based performing, presenting and exhibiting arts institutions across the nation, we write to urge you to support the Community Arts Partnership Act as a provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (S. 1513). The Community Arts Partnership Act would encourage local school systems and the various cultural organizations in a community to form creative partnerships that provide at-risk students with innovative, positive learning experiences. This important program would help improve the educational performance and future potential of at-risk children and youth by bringing the arts to these children through demonstration grants to eligible cultural entities. We applaud this recognition of the important role the arts play in education through their unique ability to teach, communicate and inspire.

Performing, presenting and exhibiting nonprofit arts organizations repeatedly have demonstrated their unique ability to promote learning and instill in students the motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence vital to academic and personal success. Some organizations, such as the Seattle Opera, participate in programs that provide homeless children with educational and recreational activities. Others, such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, are involved in programs that provide constructive alternatives for those young people particularly vulnerable to gang activity or drugs.

Parents, participants and community leaders repeatedly acknowledge the value of these programs. As Lachan Richardson, a participant in the Living Stage Theatre Company's Teen Mothers of Today program, told the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee last year, "By coming to Living Stage...I have a whole new outlook on life. At school I think my English is better now. Before I only wrote in phrases. Now I use my mind better and write in full sentences...For me and my friends art is a life-line."

We urge you to support this important provision. Please contact Lee Kessler at the Arts Alliance if you have any questions or want additional information.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Bergman
Chair

Judith E. Golub
Executive Director