Community Arts Partnership Act: Correspondence (1994): Correspondence 05

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April 27, 1994

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

On behalf of America's 101 professional nonprofit opera companies, as well as the hundreds of thousands served by these companies each year, OPERA America urges 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 community cultural organizations to form creative partnerships that would provide at-risk students with innovative, positive learning experiences. We applaud this recognition of the important role the arts play in education through their unique ability to teach, communicate, and inspire.

We in the opera field are very aware of the arts' valuable contributions to the development and education of our country's youth. In fact, over 93 percent of OPERA America companies maintain educational and outreach programs in their home communities. These programs repeatedly have demonstrated the arts' unique ability to promote learning and instill in students the motivation, self-esteem, and self-confidence vital to academic and personal success.

Seattle Opera, for instance, participates in programs that provide homeless children as well as incarcerated youth with educational and recreation activities. Los Angeles Music Center Opera works with young immigrants to create original music-theater pieces based on their experiences. American Music Theater Festival in Philadelphia provides constructive alternatives to young people particularly vulnerable to gang activity and drugs.

These programs are important to the future of our youth and of our country. We urge you to support the Community Arts Partnership Act. Please contact us if we can be of service.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Scorca
Chief Executive Officer

Laura J. Young
Public Affairs Director