1994

Design Arts: National Academy of Design (1994): Correspondence 06

R. William Mitchell

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July 25, 1994

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 1,300 presenting organizations, artists, and artist management nationwide that are members of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, we urge you to support Senator Jeffords’ amendment to restore the 5 percent reduction in NEA funding and to vote against expected weakening amendments to the NEA appropriations in the FY 95 Interior Appropriations bill.

The FY 95 NEA appropriation was reduced by 5 percent through large cuts to three NEA programs: theatre (cut by 42%), visual arts (cut by 41.7%), and presenting and commissioning (interarts) (cut by 40.5%). Not only do we believe it is unreasonable to single out specific programs, but we also believe that in reducing funding to the Presenting and Commissioning Program you will be placing at risk programs that you support and that are valuable to your constituents. For example, the Presenting and Commissioning Program supports the Rural/Inner City Presenting Initiative, an innovative project to support small presenting organizations in Montana, Louisiana, Maine, Illinois, South Dakota, and Alaska. The Presenting and Commissioning Program also provides significant funding to six regional consortia of state arts agencies to fund presenting in underserved areas throughout the country. It is through these initiatives that the Endowment supports the opportunity for citizens in small communities to experience the work of outstanding artists from around the world.

It is also expected that at least three weakening amendments will be introduced on the floor. These amendments would attempt to impose content restrictions, further cut or change the distribution formula to the states, and change procedures in the grantmaking process. We strongly urge you to oppose content restrictions, which have been addressed by the Senate over the past few years. Additionally, increased cuts or changes in the distribution funding would further weaken the NEA’s national role of promoting the arts. With regards to the change in grantmaking procedures and processes, any amendments to an appropriations bill are non-germane and are more appropriately left for the upcoming reauthorization of the NEA, at which time such concerns would have a proper forum for redress.

We encourage you to actively support Senator Jeffords in his attempt to restore the arbitrary cuts to the NEA and to speak and vote against the weakening amendments on the floor. Thank you in advance for your vocal support.

Sincerely,

Bill Mitchell
R. William Mitchell
President

Susan S. Farr
Executive Director