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July 25, 1994

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 3,800 local arts councils and agencies throughout every district in the nation, I am writing to urge you to support the President’s request for level funding for the National Endowment for the Arts at $170.2 million.

Because the Senate FY '95 Interior Appropriations bill, HR 4602, currently includes a punitive 5 percent cut ($8.5 million) to the NEA’s FY '95 budget, we urge you to vote for the bi-partisan Jeffords/Pell amendment to restore this egregious 5 percent cut. We also urge you to oppose all weakening amendments, including possible amendments offered by Senator Helms to restrict artistic content, make further budgetary cuts, or make arbitrary changes in the NEA’s grantmaking procedures and allocations.

Please know that if you vote against restoring the 5 percent cut, then you will be bringing the NEA’s budget to a level below that for FY 1984! Additionally, because the 5 percent cut is specifically targeted to punish three program areas of the Endowment, it, in effect would cripple these programs:

- Theatre Program: 42 percent proposed budget cut
- Visual Arts Program: 41.7 percent proposed budget cut
- Presenting & Commissions: 40.5 percent proposed budget cut
- Miscellaneous programs: 5 percent proposed budget cut

In partnership with state, regional and local arts agencies, as well as the discipline-based arts organizations, the NEA reaches out to every corner of America from rural communities to inner-city urban populations in order to make the arts accessible to your constituents. The NEA has made unprecedented achievements not only in making that small amount of money go a long way, but the NEA also plays a leadership role in helping steer the private sector toward addressing such critical needs as arts education.

I know that you, and every one of your colleagues in the Senate are working hard toward deficit reduction while increasing economic stimulus programs. Cutting any portion of the NEA’s appropriations budget could negatively impact the economic growth in every state. According to our recent study, *Arts in the Local Economy*, the nonprofit arts industry contributes $36.8 billion to the national economy and supports 1.3 million jobs. Furthermore, the nonprofit arts industry generates $1.2 billion in state government revenue and $3.4 billion in federal income tax revenue each year. For every $1 spent by the federal government on the National Endowment for the Arts, there is a $21 return to the U.S. Treasury.

The federal government has a unique and critical role in cultural giving. Full federal funding for the arts is vital to the cultural and economic growth of each state. The NEA’s funds act as a stimulus to generate private sector, state and local government activity because matching funds are required. Once again, we urge you to vote for the Jeffords/Pell amendment to restore full funding to the NEA's FY '95 budget. We also ask that you vote against all weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO

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