Community Arts Partnership Act: Correspondence (1994): Correspondence 15

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The Honorable Elliot L. Engel
1433 Longworth Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Engel,

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, representing the state and special jurisdictional government arts agencies of the United States, supports your efforts to improve access to the arts for children as demonstrated in H.R. 2933, the Community Arts Partnership Act of 1993.

State arts agencies place a high priority on making the arts basic to education. Arts education fosters the development of intellectual, perceptual, emotional and communication skills. As part of a basic education, the arts help us to understand our lives, cultures and histories, and to invest them with meaning.

We believe, as your bill proposes, that arts education is a cooperative effort shared by arts agencies, education agencies, cultural organizations, and artists. That is why we believe it is important that H.R. 2933 include as eligible entities in partnership with local education agencies, the broad range of cultural organizations and educational institutions which are part of a community's framework for education in the arts.

In endorsing H.R. 2933, we would suggest expanding the definition of cultural entity to include "performing, presenting, and exhibiting arts institutions; literary arts organizations; and local arts agencies" — recognizing the education programs available in communities from orchestras and music groups, dance and opera companies, theaters, arts presenting organizations, museums, visual arts organizations and writers programs. Local arts agencies, which exist in thousands of communities across the country, in many cases are the sole focus, especially in rural and small communities, of the available cultural activity and the entity that provides arts education programs. We hope you will agree that a broader definition of eligible cultural entities recognizes the variety of ways in which arts education programs are made available in communities.

We appreciate your consideration of these suggestions, and we look forward to working with you to ensure the adoption of H.R. 2933 in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Thank you for your leadership in arts education.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Katz
Executive Director