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Community Arts Partnership Act: Correspondence (1994): Correspondence 27

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August 5, 1994

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

Dear Senator Pell,

On behalf of the American Arts Alliance representing over 2,600 community based performing, presenting, and exhibiting arts institutions across the country, we write to thank you for your leadership role in including the Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth program in the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act. (ESEA, S. 1513). However, we remain deeply concerned about the program's trigger mechanism which would defund the initiative unless the NEA, NEH, and the IMS receive FY95 funding at their FY94 levels. Given the House approved 2% cut and the Senate approved 5% cut to the NEA's FY95 appropriation, this important new program is almost certain to be ineligible for funding before it even has a chance to function. We therefore urge you to eliminate the trigger mechanism during conference.

As you well know, the Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth would encourage local school systems and community cultural organizations to form creative partnerships that provide at-risk students with innovative, positive learning experiences. Through demonstration grants, the initiative would help improve the educational performance and future potential of at-risk children and youth by bringing the arts to these children.

Arts organizations repeatedly have demonstrated their unique ability to promote learning and instill in students self-esteem and self-confidence. Organizations, such as the Intiman Theatre Company in Seattle, Washington, conduct acting workshops in public schools to help students, who speak English as a second language adapt to their new environment. Another arts group, the Boston Ballet, provides education and training in the art of dance to young people who presently do not have this opportunity due to the lack of cultural education in the public schools and/or their socio-economic background.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure the viability of the Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth. We also would like to thank David Evans and Daniel Ritter for their advice and guidance on this issue. Please contact Lee Kessler at the Arts Alliance for additional information.

Sincerely,

Roche Schulfer
Chair

Judith E. Golub
Executive Director