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Hundreds Rally at City Hall Against President Trump to Save Arts & Cultural Programs



Hundreds gathered for a rally to highlight the importance of arts funding on Arts Advocacy Day. Photo Credit: Supervisor Jane Kim

Today, Supervisors Jane Kim and Sandra Lee Fewer joined nearly 400 arts leaders, artists, and community members who rallied in front of City Hall in support of the arts. The event included performances by ABADA-Capoeira and nine speakers ranging from various culture bearers, artists, and arts workers from the community.



ABADA-Capoeira's performance to kick off the rally. Photo credit: Abbie Leigh

Simultaneously, Americans for the Arts brought together 85 national arts organizations & over 500 grassroots arts advocates to visit their Congressmembers in D.C. to reject President Trump's proposed elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for Humanities, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Sarah Pritchard from SOMArts Cultural Center speaking to the 400-strong arts crowd. Photo Credit: Abbie Leigh

San Francisco's arts and culture ecosystem could face losses ranging from \$2.5 - \$6.5 million in the event of the NEA's proposed elimination alone.

Ruth Nott described the important role arts and culture plays in the community with San Francisco's school district: "The Opera works with American Conservatory Theater and SFJAZZ to provide programming in the San Francisco Unified School District...Through our collaboration we helped kids like Armand, a 16-year old student of Downtown High School, discover a passion for theater and dance in a safe environment where he was not judged. That is the power of arts."

Katherin Canton, the organizer for Arts for a Better Bay Area, outlined the requests of local supervisors: no cuts to the Grants for the Arts or the San Francisco Arts Commission and an additional \$2.5 million split within the two agencies. They are the two primary granting organizations that provide grants to arts organizations, independent artists, cultural groups, and cultural centers across San Francisco. 75% of the Grants for the Arts funds alone go toward salaries for nonprofit arts workers, showing just how vital these agencies are to keeping artists working and living here.

Jason Bayani from Kearny Street Workshop summarized the importance of investing in our arts and cultural organizations: “In 1972 Kearny Street Workshop began with \$2000 in federal and city grants. We are here 45 years later because of these grants. We are one of many organizations out here providing opportunities and space. Fighting for the arts is one way we fight for our agency, our self determination.”



Jason Bayani from Kearny Street Workshop addressing the crowd. Photo credit: Abbie Leigh

Last year, Proposition S brought over 100 arts organizations together in an unprecedented effort to secure funding for these two agencies and won over 63% of voter support. Jonathan Moscone, Chief Civic Engagement Officer at YBCA served as a co-proponent of Prop S and discussed the importance of artists and cultural leaders getting involved in the political process: “We got so close with Prop S but we have to work together

The group continued to the Supervisors’ Board meeting in the afternoon to share their personal experiences working in the arts in San Francisco. The Mayor’s office is expected to release their budget proposal by June 1st.