

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Mikulski, and Chairman Murkowski:

We write to express appreciation for your continued support of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and to urge you to support President Obama's \$147.9 million funding request for each of the endowments. Federal support for the arts and humanities is a vital economic, educational, and cultural priority that impacts many communities across the United States.

For nearly 50 years, the NEA has provided strategic leadership and investment in the arts and has proudly expanded arts activity across the nation with the mission "to bring arts to every American." Every dollar spent on federal arts initiatives leverages eight non-federal dollars enriching children and communities through access to the arts that they would otherwise not have.

Federal funding for the NEA acts as seed money that generates massive economic return. The non-profit arts industry generates over \$135 billion annually in economic activity and supports 4.7 million full-time jobs. Additionally, the federal government enjoys a direct return of \$9.59 billion in income taxes, as well as the indirect benefit of improved education, community development, and increased business activity from across the country.

The requested funding for FY16 for the NEA will help the endowment maintain its extremely successful programs, including *The Big Read*, *Our Town*, *Challenge America*, *The Mayor's Institute on City Design*, *Blue Star Museums*, *Shakespeare in American Communities*, *Art Works* and *Poetry Out Loud*.

The NEH is the primary source of federal support for humanities research and related activities in the United States. It provides support for professional development to scholars, educators, curators, librarians, historians, filmmakers, and more. Through the endowment's efforts, our national heritage is preserved, civic institutions are strengthened, and Americans are better prepared to address the challenges in a constantly changing world. In addition to appropriated funding, the NEH is able to leverage significant, non-federal contributions through competitive grant awards, with direct matching totaling more than \$2 billion over the last few decades.

Federal funding for the NEH includes support for state humanities councils that work in partnership with the endowment to reach millions of Americans each year through teacher institutes,

family literacy programs, and thousands of other efforts. With this extensive network of state humanities councils and general NEH programming, the endowment reaches every state and territory across the nation. NEH grants have supported thousands of projects, including *The Civil War*, the landmark documentary by Ken Burns viewed by 38 million Americans, The U.S. Newspaper Project, which catalogued and microfilmed 63 million pages of historic newspapers, and has supported more than 56,000 lectures, discussions, exhibitions and other educational programs each year.

FY16 funding will continue to support the Standing Together Initiative which aims to promote understanding of the military experience to support returning veterans. Other programs such as the *NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership* was established in 2011 to explore how creative arts therapy and arts engagement programs can improve health and well-being in military healthcare settings. This successful partnerships supports writing, visual arts, and music arts therapy for patients at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the *National Intrepid Center of Excellence* (NICoE). In the program, a creative arts therapist works with patients using art therapies to improve communication, externalize and process traumatic events, as well as improve and restore neurological and physical function.

The healing arts program has been so successful, the NEA expanded the partnership in 2013 to bring visual arts therapy and expressive writing activities to military partners at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital's satellite NICoE center in Virginia. With the growing demand among military treatment facilities wanting art therapy programs, and with the proposed increase, the NEA will be able to bring healing arts program to more of our service members.

Thanks to your leadership, the NEA and NEH continue to play a vital role in every state. We urge you to continue to support federal funding of the arts and humanities in FY16 with a \$147.9 million funding level for each of the endowments in the final appropriations legislation. We appreciate your attention to this vital funding, and look forward to working with you on this and the other important issues facing our nation.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



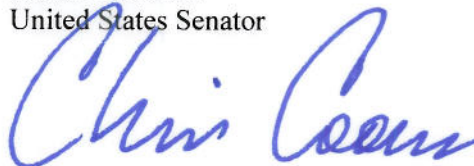
Jack Reed  
United States Senator



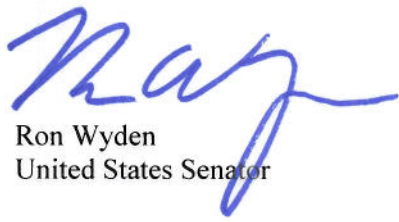
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



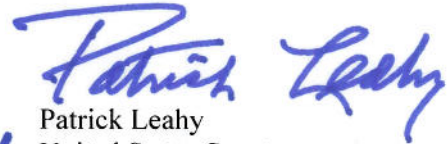
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



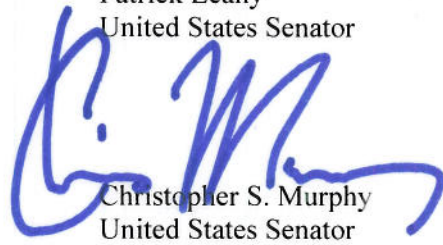
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



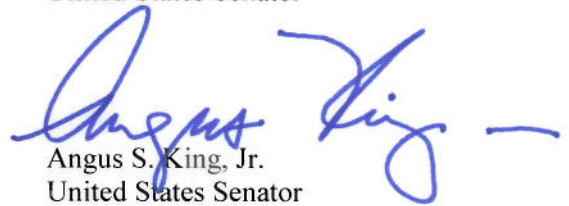
Kristen Gillibrand  
United States Senator



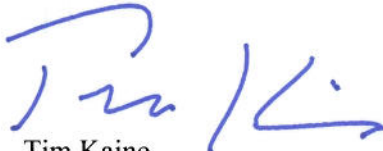
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Gary Peters  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Mark Warner  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Bob Menendez  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator