

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 3, 2009

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education And Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education And Related  
Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We urge you to support \$53 million for the Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education in the Fiscal Year 2010 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill. The Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education funds model arts education programs in schools in communities throughout the country, the professional development of arts educators, and the ongoing national arts education initiatives of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and VSA arts, a program which ensures that people with disabilities can participate in the arts. Years of research demonstrate that a significant link exists between arts education and students' academic performance, as well as their social development, motivations, attitudes, and disposition toward learning.

Thanks to your leadership, the FY 2009 Omnibus spending bill funded the Arts in Education program at \$38.16 million. At a time when model programs supported by the Department are showing impressive results and the need for arts in education could not be greater, it is imperative that we continue to increase funding for this program. Indeed, President Obama agrees and stated as part of his arts policy platform that "in addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education."

Funding the Arts in Education program is an excellent way to provide meaningful arts education to our children. Since 2004, the Professional Development grants program has supported 52 projects that serve as national models for effective arts education professional development. Increased Arts in Education funds will also provide unique federal support for projects that strengthen student learning through standards-based arts education and integration of arts instruction into other subject areas. Funding will also help provide grants that identify innovative models that improve instruction for arts specialists and classroom teachers. Moreover, funding VSA arts and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts supports national networks that ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities and other underserved populations.

Arts education has a role to play in developing our nation's workforce as well. According a 2007 Conference Board report, there is overwhelming support from school superintendents and corporate leaders that creativity is of increasing importance to the U.S workforce. A report

released in December of 2006 by the *New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* said, "The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services." The arts are an essential skill for fostering the type of innovative thinker that will thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century creative economy.

Our states, schools, and communities are poised to further strengthen arts education, but they need our help. We urge you to support the educational development of our schoolchildren and the professional development of our teachers by including \$53 million in funding for Arts in Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter

Ellen Stauscher

Orlwin L. Watt

Caulyn B. Malony

Lyann Woodberg

Howard L. Berman

Jim McDermott

Brad Smith

Todd R. Platts

Alcee D. Hastings

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Just Felix

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John Spurr J.

Bill Pascoe Jr

Charles B. Rangel

Carl Romney

Niki Tsongas

Paul Torso

Boris O. Matsui

John X

Phil Hine

Sam A. Austin

Michael H. Mecham

Bob Eberly

Rush Holt

## **FY10 Arts in Education Signatories**

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