United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Chairman Murkowski,

We write today to express our steadfast support for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). For more than 50 years, the NEA and NEH have promoted educational and cultural experiences that generate tremendous economic returns for communities in every single state in the country. We urge you to continue bipartisan support by rejecting the Administration's budget proposal to eliminate the NEA and NEH. We respectfully request you support funding of no less than $155 million for each of the NEA and NEH for fiscal year 2019.

Since its creation in 1965, the NEH has funded groundbreaking scholarly research, preserved essential cultural and educational resources, cataloged more than 63 million pages of our nation's historic newspapers, and helped millions of young people grapple with the lessons of history. Also established in 1965, the NEA supports art and education programs across the country. Access to the arts for all Americans is a core principle of the Endowment. The majority of NEA grants go to small and medium-sized organizations, and a significant percentage of grants fund programs in high-poverty communities throughout the country.

NEA and NEH serve as an important economic driver at the community level. The arts generate economic growth and employ more than 4 million people in the creative industries nationally. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector is a $763.6 billion industry, or 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP. Arts and humanities education are critical to prepare our students for the innovative thinking required in the 21st century workplace. Students with an enriched education that includes the arts, have higher GPAs and standard test scores and lower drop-out rates. Every federal dollar spent on arts initiatives sparks funding collaborations that leverage more than nine non-federal dollars from collaborations with private foundations.

As an example of the tremendous value NEA and NEH provide nationwide, both agencies offer healing programs for those who serve in our Armed Services and their families, as well as veterans reintegrating into civilian life. The NEH's Warriors Scholar Project provides an "academic boot camp" for veterans entering or returning to college. Since 2012, the NEH program has served over 500 veterans and expanded to 11 school locations across the nation. The NEA's Military Healing Arts Partnership provides art therapy for active-duty military patients and their families to improve communication, process

traumatic events, and improve neurological and physical function. The program started at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and has now expanded to 11 other facilities across the country.

Thanks to your continued leadership, the NEA and NEH play a vital role in every state. We appreciate your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you on this and other important issues facing our nation.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

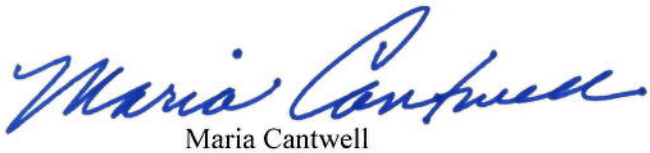
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

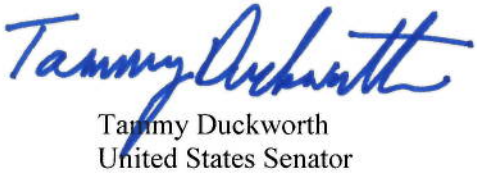
Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

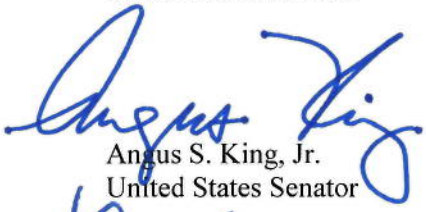
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

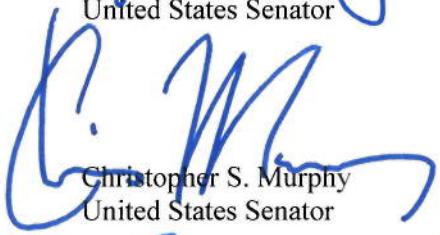
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

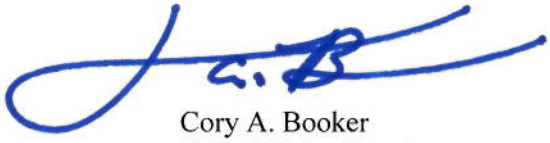


Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

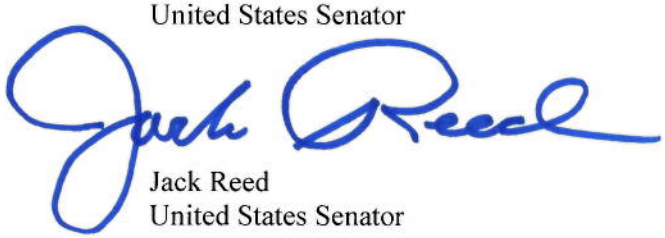


Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

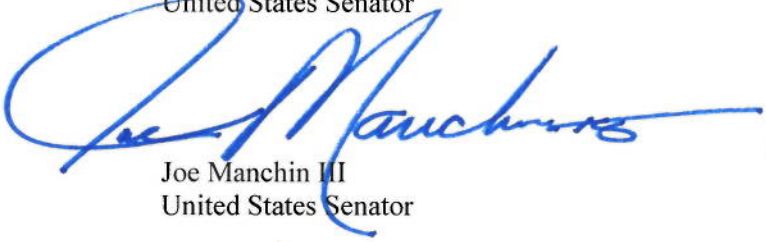


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



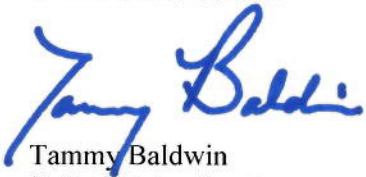
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

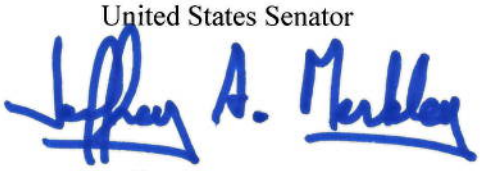
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

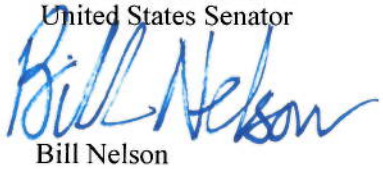
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator