Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

We urge you to support a funding level of $155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Interior Appropriations bill. **Federal investment in the arts provides all Americans with expanded opportunities to engage with the arts in each state and district.** The NEA reached its peak funding at $176 million in FY92, and has never fully recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in FY96.

In addition to grants made to every Congressional district, national research, and critical partnerships with the states, the **Arts Endowment is at the forefront of a national effort to support arts and health in the military.** The launch of the Creative Forces Military Healing Arts Network in October – an expanded partnership between the NEA and the Department of Defense – now further increases access to therapeutic arts activities in local communities for members of the military, veterans, and their families. Creative Forces continues the successful work of the NEA's Military Healing Arts Partnership to bring healing arts to more service members, veterans, and families in both clinical and community settings. As the NEA may continue to build existing programs into this network with federal investment, **every state will benefit from this program.**

With an overall budget increase of $1.98 million to NEA's funding, as approved by Congress for FY16, the Creative Forces program has successfully expanded to additional clinical sites. **Growing and unmet demand among military treatment facilities for creative art therapy programs continues.** With the $1.9 million increase in funding for FY17, which was also recommended and supported by the Committee, the NEA will be able to reach more of our service members and their families.

In addition to supporting our military service members, the NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of our communities. Arts and culture-related industries create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These arts businesses represent 3.9 percent of all businesses and 1.9 percent of all employees, respectively. **America's arts and entertainment are also leading exports**, with $60 billion annually in overseas sales, **creating a $26 billion arts trade surplus.**

This past February, the Bureau of Economic Analysis found that the total dollar amount that **the arts and culture sector contributes** to the U.S. economy is **more than $729 billion**, or 4.23 percent of the U.S.

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Gross Domestic Product, more than construction ($672B) or transportation and warehousing ($510B). From the work of nonprofit arts organizations to the impact of cultural tourism, **the creative sector is important to state economies all across the country.**

Few other federal investments have such a widespread impact and multiplying effect across the nation as does the Arts Endowment. For every one dollar spent on direct grants, nearly nine non-federal dollars are matched, generating $600 million in matching support while at the same time enriching our children and communities with access to the arts they might not otherwise have. Moreover, **forty percent of NEA's grant-making budget—approximately $47 million in FY17—is re-granted through state arts agencies and regional arts organizations.** Private support cannot match the leveraging role of government cultural funding.

The requested funding for FY18 will help the NEA maintain its enormously successful programs, including *The Big Read, Our Town, Challenge America, The Mayors' Institute on City Design, The Citizens Institute on Rural Design, Blue Star Museums, Shakespeare in American Communities, Art Works,* and *Poetry Out Loud*, which help the NEA reach every congressional district in the country, serving rural and urban communities; impacting veterans, businesses, and schools. In FY15, the NEA granted $120 million in appropriated funds through over 2,400 grants in nearly 16,000 communities in every congressional district in the country.

The arts also play a significant role in equalizing educational opportunities. **Students with an education rich in the arts have higher GPAs and standardized test scores and lower drop-out rates.** The NEA's education programs have helped to sustain support in local communities for arts education, which has been proven to help close the education achievement gap and also benefit children and adults in many important ways throughout their lives.

We strongly urge you to support NEA funding at $155 million in the Fiscal Year 2018 Interior Appropriations bill. By approving this level of funding, you will maintain the NEA's ability to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from the arts. We appreciate your attention to this request, and hope we can count on your continued support.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus
Member of Congress

Robert Brady
Member of Congress

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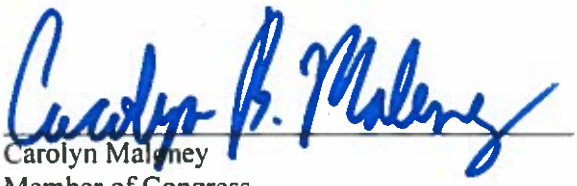
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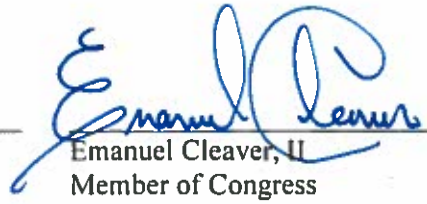
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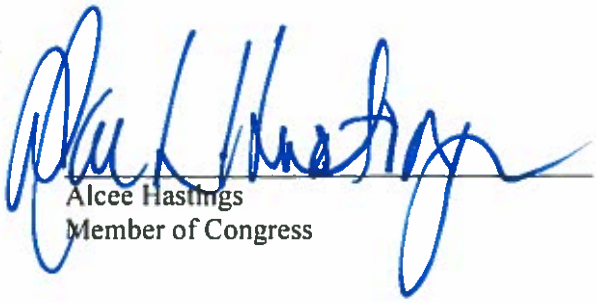
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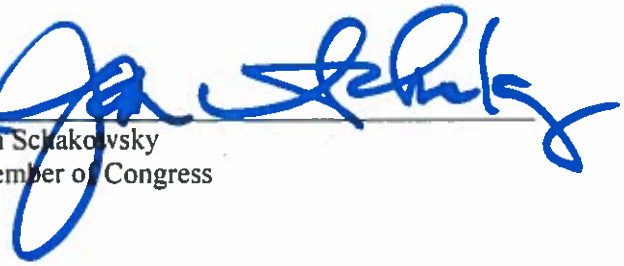
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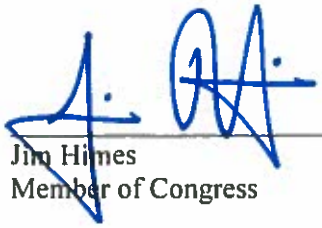
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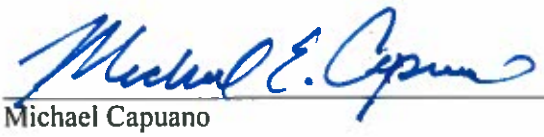
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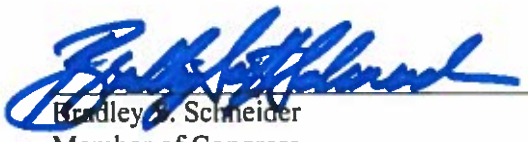
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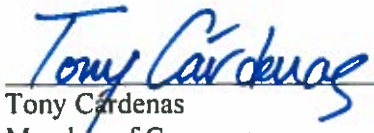
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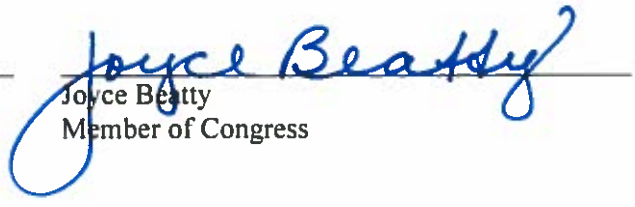
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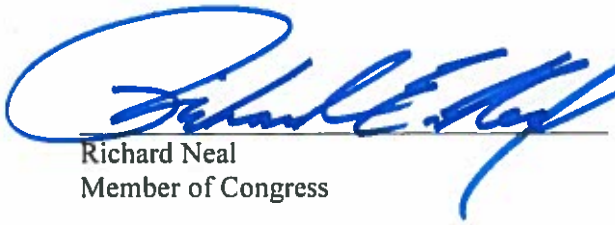
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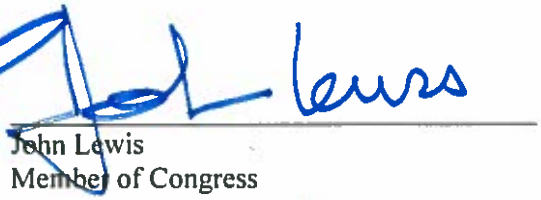
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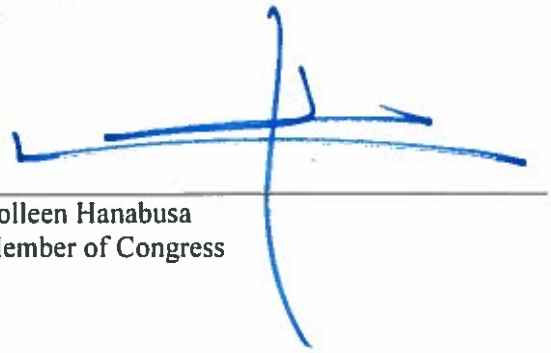
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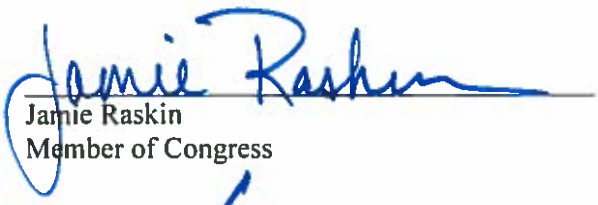
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