



## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES

April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress,

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, representing the state and special jurisdictional government arts agencies of the United States and a national cosponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2008, urges you to support a budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in FY2009 at \$176 million, which would restore the NEA funding to the level reached in 1992.

Appropriations for the NEA at that level would enable the NEA to expand upon its core mission to support and promote the creation, preservation and presentation of the arts in America, and to fund the Challenge America initiative, which uses the arts to enhance America's communities through grants for arts education, youth at risk, cultural preservation, community arts partnerships and improved access to the arts for all Americans. Funding would also support the American Masterpieces initiative, aimed at broadening the availability of America's acknowledged masterpieces through touring, local presentation and arts education.

The range of activities funded by the NEA clearly demonstrates that the National Endowment for the Arts serves all Americans—in all states and jurisdictions, in rural communities and in inner-city neighborhoods. Through its programs, the NEA makes America a better place to live—playing a role in sustaining the organizations that produce and present the arts, enhancing the economy as well as community life, and producing educational programs. With more than 2,200 grants awarded each year, the NEA connects millions of Americans with the best of our nation's creative spirit.

The federal government, in partnership with state and local governments, private business and the nonprofit sector, provides the infrastructure of support for the arts that is critical to the economic vitality of state and local communities and to our nation's cultural well-being. NEA funds granted to state arts agencies ensure that every state receives federal funds. Representing 40 percent of NEA's program dollars, grants to state arts agencies combine with state legislative appropriations and other dollars to ensure broad access to the arts for communities throughout the state and serve to strengthen the state's arts infrastructure, through a combination of direct grants, technical assistance and services.

We are encouraged that last year Congress voted to support the arts at \$144.7 million with the largest dollar boost in funding for the NEA since 1979. We urge Congress to continue in that direction to meet the real needs of Americans to broaden, deepen, and diversify their participation in the arts.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Katz  
Chief Executive Officer