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March 31, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

The Educational Theatre Association is proud to be a co-sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2009.

EdTA is the professional organization for theatre education, dedicated to promoting and strengthening theatre education as a means of lifelong learning. We represent over 4,475 professional members, 90,000 current student members, and almost 2,000,000 alumni student members in the United States.

A recent report by the Conference Board found that an overwhelming majority of surveyed school superintendents who educate future workers and employers who hire them agree that creativity is increasingly important in U.S. workplaces. The report states that 99 percent of the 155 surveyed school superintendents and 97 percent of the eighty-nine surveyed business executives believe that arts training—and, to a lesser degree, communications studies—are crucial to developing creativity. Significantly, 97 percent said that involvement in drama activities develops creativity. (Source: *Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?*, 2008)

On this day of advocating for the arts, we ask members of Congress to consider in your decision making the research confirming the value of arts education. Your support is needed for the arts in our schools and society, and their role in developing the creativity and imagination needed for our Twenty-First century workforce.

We ask you to support the following actions as described in the issue briefs that follow in this handbook:

- Retain the arts in the definition of core academic subjects of learning.
- Require annual state reports on student access to all core academic subjects.
- Expand public/private partnerships between schools and arts organizations
- Improve national data collection and research in arts education.
- Reauthorize the Arts in Education programs of the U.S. Department of Education.
- Work to ensure that all four art forms are included in future NAEP tests.
- Deploy arts education as an economic development strategy.

On behalf of the thousands of theatre teachers, parents and students in our nation who believe that a portion of our tax dollars should be directed toward supporting our nation's cultural and educational initiatives, we encourage you to help establish a lasting legacy of the arts and humanities for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry D. Smith, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Jerry D. Smith, Jr.
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Peitz", written in a cursive style.

Michael J. Peitz, CAE
Executive Director