



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2005

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor and Ranking Member Dicks:

We urge you to support a budget of **\$136.3 million for the National Endowment for the Arts**. This represents a \$15 million increase over the FY 05 budget of \$121.3 million and would go towards supporting the NEA's mission to bring the arts to all Americans. An increase would ensure that the NEA can continue to support the creation, preservation and presentation of the arts in every corner of the country, as well as fund popular initiatives like *Challenge America*, *American Masterpieces*, *Shakespeare in American Communities*, *Operation Homecoming*, and *Jazz Masters*. Without an increase, the NEA will be unable to maintain existing programs, expand existing ones or undertake new initiatives without diminishing existing programs of great effectiveness.

Additional funds will allow the Agency to continue to serve the American people through innovative programs. Among the programs in 2005, *Shakespeare in American Communities* has brought professional theatre productions to more than 100 communities in all 50 states, including U.S. military bases; *Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience*, provides a unique literary experience for U.S. military personnel and their families; and *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, 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.

The NEA has never recovered from a 40% budget cut in FY 96 and its programs remain seriously underfunded. A budget of \$136.3 million for the NEA is an affordable investment in the arts, although it represents less than the \$170 million it received ten years ago and less than the American public want and need.

The NEA is a great investment in the economic growth of every community. The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$134 billion annually in economic activity, supports 4.8 million full-time equivalent jobs and returns \$10.5 billion to the federal government in income taxes. That's an 8:1 return.

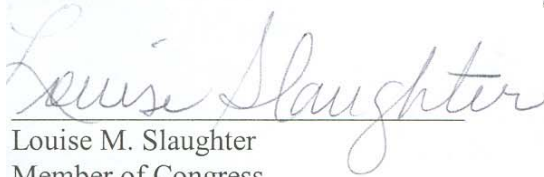
In 2004, the NEA provided direct grants in 99% of all congressional districts. The NEA has helped spread the benefit of the arts across the nation through its funding partnership with state arts agencies, which receive 40% of its appropriated program funds.

Federal funding for the arts is critical to leveraging private funding. Private support cannot replace the leadership role of government cultural funding, especially at a time when all forms of support for the arts are down while needs are greater than ever.

The NEA supports life-long learning in the arts. 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 as well as to benefit children and adults in many important ways. During these critical times, Americans look to the arts for education, entertainment, and enlightenment.


By approving this budget increase, you will strengthen the NEA's ability to play its part for all Americans.

Sincerely,

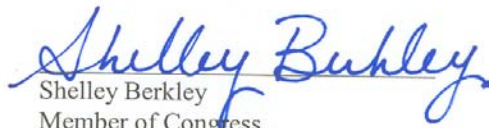


Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress


Christopher Shays
Member of Congress
Neil Abercrombie
Member of Congress
Thomas H. Allen
Member of Congress
Robert E. Andrews
Member of Congress
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress



Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress



Timothy H. Bishop
Member of Congress



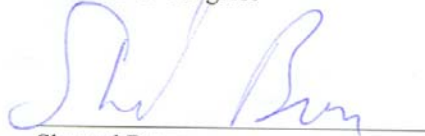
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Sherwood Boehlert
Member of Congress



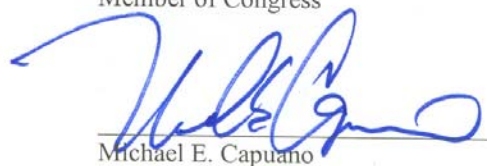
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Sherrod Brown
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Benjamin L. Cardin
Member of Congress



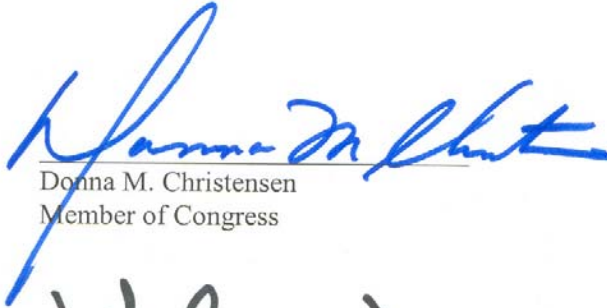
Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



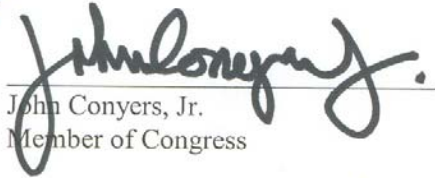
Ben Chandler
Member of Congress



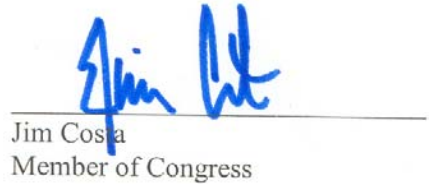
Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



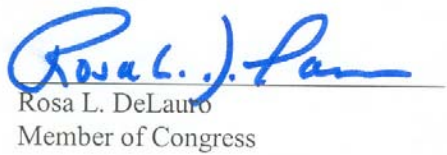
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



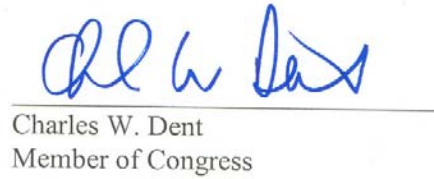
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



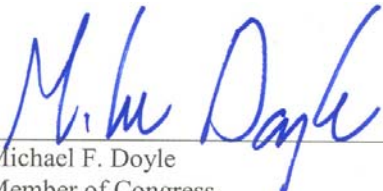
Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress




John D. Dingell
Member of Congress

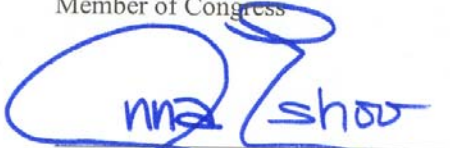


Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress


Michael F. Doyle
Member of Congress


Rahm Emanuel
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress


Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress


Lane Evans
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress


Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress


Mike Ferguson
Member of Congress


Bob Filner
Member of Congress


Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress


Gene Green
Member of Congress


Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress


Jane Harman
Member of Congress


Katherine Harris
Member of Congress

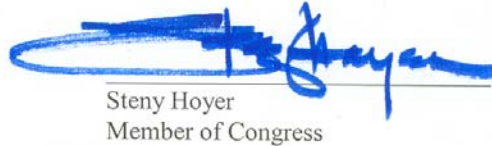

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress


Stephanie Herseth
Member of Congress


Tim Holden
Member of Congress


Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress


Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress


Steny Hoyer
Member of Congress


Jay Inslee
Member of Congress


Steve Israel
Member of Congress

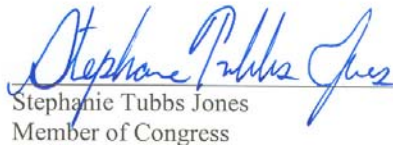

Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress


William J. Jefferson
Member of Congress


Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress


Nancy L. Johnson
Member of Congress


Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress

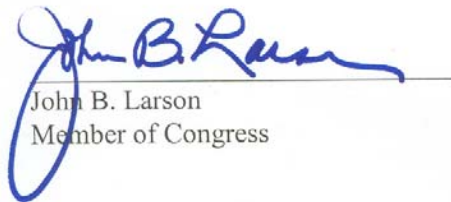

Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Member of Congress

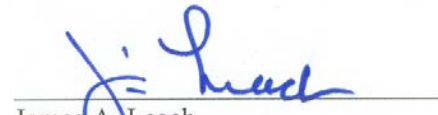

Sue W. Kelly
Member of Congress


Dale E. Kildee
Member of Congress

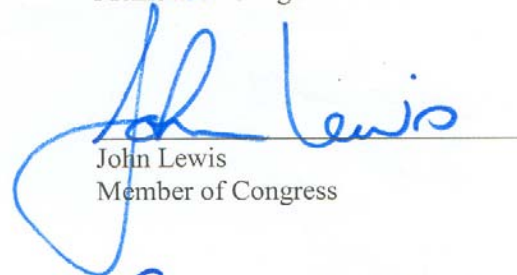

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress


Tom Lantos
Member of Congress

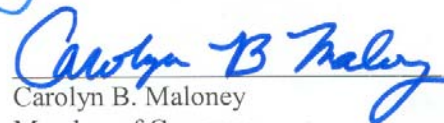

John B. Larson
Member of Congress


James A. Leach
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

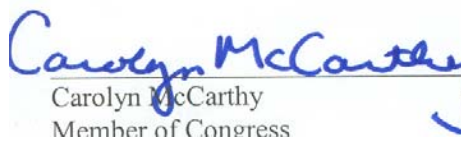

John Lewis
Member of Congress



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress


Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress


Jim Matheson
Member of Congress


Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress


Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress


Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

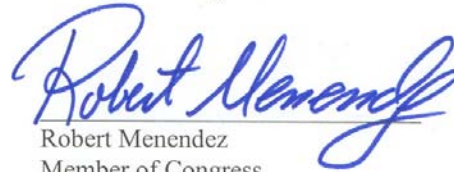

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress


James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Michael R. McNulty
Member of Congress


Kendrick B. Meek
Member of Congress

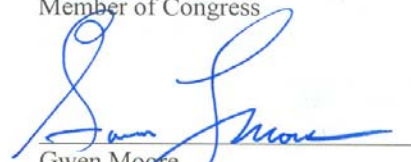

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress


Robert Menendez
Member of Congress


Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress


Juanita Millender-McDonald
Member of Congress


Dennis Moore
Member of Congress


Gwen Moore
Member of Congress


James P. Moran
Member of Congress


Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


James L. Oberstar
Member of Congress



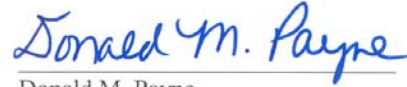
Major R. Owens
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



Jim Ramstad
Member of Congress



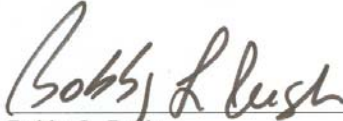
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Mike Ross
Member of Congress



C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



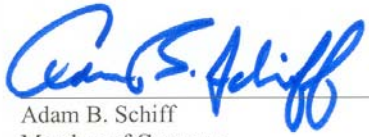
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Martin Olav Sabo
Member of Congress



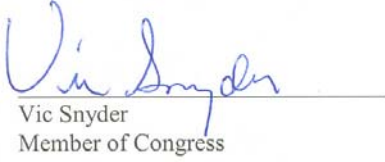
Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



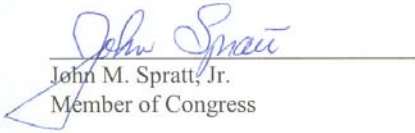
Rob Simmons
Member of Congress



Vic Snyder
Member of Congress



Hilda L. Solis
Member of Congress



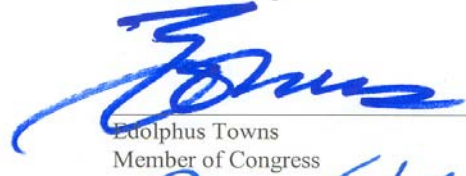
John M. Spratt, Jr.
Member of Congress



Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress



Bart Stupak
Member of Congress



Euolphus Towns
Member of Congress



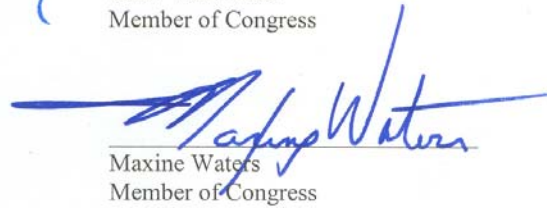
Tom Udall
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velazquez
Member of Congress



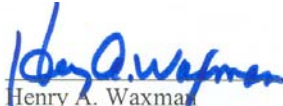
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



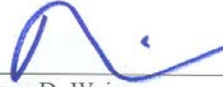
Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress




Melvin L. Watt
Member of Congress



Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



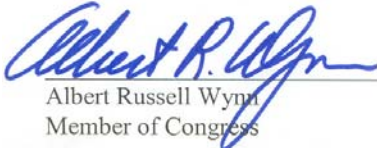
Anthony D. Weiner
Member of Congress



Robert Wexler
Member of Congress



Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress



Albert Russell Wynn
Member of Congress