



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Television and Film Artists Join Grassroots Activists for Americans for the Arts' Arts Advocacy Day

Advocates Come at a Time of Assault on Arts Funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts, brought together arts advocates from around the country today for its annual "Arts Advocacy Day." Advocates arrive in Washington just one week after U.S. Representative Pat Toomey (R-PA) offered a floor amendment to zero out funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in the FY 2004 budget. The amendment failed.

"Like all Americans, our hearts have been with the troops fighting the war in Iraq," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "But our job here in Washington as arts advocates remains the same. We are the stewards of the federal arts budget and are fiercely determined to protect these monies and the important role they play in the lives of millions of Americans."

As part of the day's events, the organization presented its Congressional "Government Leadership in the Arts Award" to United States Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi.

Senator Cochran was recognized during Americans for the Arts' annual congressional arts breakfast on Capitol Hill. Well-known film and television artists joined grassroots arts advocates representing some 67 national and local organizations for meetings with the Administration and members of Congress to discuss the importance of arts funding at both the federal and local levels.

"Senator Cochran is the U.S. Senate's true champion of arts education," said Mr. Lynch. "Young people throughout the nation have opportunities and experiences in the arts as a result of Senator Cochran's tireless work. We are proud to recognize him with this award."

Senator Cochran is a champion for the cause of arts education. As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he has been a prime mover in funding the arts education program of the U.S. Department of Education.

"We are delighted that Senator Cochran has received this prestigious award," said Tim Hedgepeth, executive director of the Mississippi Arts Commission and advocate who nominated Senator Cochran for the award.

The Toomey Amendment aside, federal arts agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) have experienced difficulties on Capitol Hill with funds topping out at \$115.7 million and \$124.9 million, respectively, representing very small increases. It's those precious dollars Americans for the Arts are so determined to keep in place.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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