



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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07/23/2009

Minnesota State Senator Richard Cohen Receives 2009 State Arts Leadership Award

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, and the National Conference of State Legislatures presents the State Leadership Arts Award to State Senator Richard Cohen of Minnesota. The award honors a public official who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts at the state level. It will be presented today at the National Conference of State Legislatures Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA, as part of the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards series.

"Sen. Cohen has demonstrated exemplary leadership and dedication to public funding for the arts," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "His advocacy for the arts in Minnesota has allowed for numerous achievements."

Minnesota State Sen. Richard Cohen receives the 2009 State Legislator Arts Leadership Award for his arts advocacy throughout the state. Cohen has been the chief legislative champion of the arts in Minnesota since his early days in the state Senate. He ensured that the arts were included in the monumental 2008 Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. This state constitutional amendment, which passed by 56 percent of the vote in November, creates dedicated funding for the arts for the next 25 years in the Minnesota. No other state constitution includes dedicated funding for the arts. He shepherded the amendment bill through six legislative sessions and firmly stated: "This will not pass unless the arts are in it."

In the 2009 legislative session, as both the Chair of the Senate Finance Committee and the Conference Committee on the Amendment, Sen. Cohen made sure that a large portion of the dedicated funding would be directed to the Minnesota State Arts Board and Regional Arts Councils, allowing funds to reach every county in Minnesota. State funding for the arts will increase from \$10 million a year to more than \$30 million a year, as a result.

Sen. Cohen was also instrumental in both creating and preserving the City of St. Paul Cultural STAR program. Now in its twelfth year, the program allocates a portion of the city's half-cent sales tax to arts and culture in the city's cultural district.

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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