

# Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. I 2007

## 2008 Presidential Elections: First Stop, New Hampshire

In case you haven't noticed, campaign 2008 is already well under way. Wouldn't you like to see the candidates put the arts front and center on their agendas or hear a candidate talk about the benefits the arts bring to our communities?

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is already hard at work securing bold new policy proposals in support of the arts and arts education from candidates for the 2008 presidential primary. We're hitting the ground running with a strong strategy for one of the earliest state primaries—New Hampshire.

Working with New Hampshire Citizens for the Arts, New Hampshire's 25-year-old statewide arts advocacy organization, Americans for the Arts Action Fund is helping to organize and train arts activists to attend and participate in candidate forums, meet-and-greets in homes, and campaign events in the year leading up to the primary elections. We're also creating an ArtsVote website

to provide members with reports on events and discussions by candidates, as well as to supply state and local research on the impact of the arts.

Already there's good news. At least one presidential candidate is talking about the arts. Former Arkansas Governor and presidential candidate Mike Huckabee (R) recently told *Meet the Press*, "One of the things that I'm very passionate about is music and art and education because it was life-changing for me. I'm a musician; I'm passionate about it, but I think this country has made a huge mistake in cutting music and art out of school budgets. And it's something we've got to address because the future economy is dependent upon a creative generation."

You can count on Americans for the Arts Action Fund to make sure the arts are on the agenda, now and throughout the 2008 presidential campaign season.

## Working for the Arts in 2007

Among the key issues that Americans for the Arts Action Fund will be following throughout 2007 is funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Department of Education's Arts

in Education programs. Several tax issues affecting artists and arts organizations are also on the agenda this year, including IRA rollovers and a proposed qualified performing artist tax benefit.

Meanwhile, we kicked things off on Arts Advocacy Day 2007 by providing training sessions and information on current arts

issues to hundreds of arts advocates who went on to lobby their elected officials during face-to-face visits on Capitol Hill. It was a powerful demonstration of the strength of our arts community and a fitting beginning to a year during which we will be leading a national coalition for advancing key legislative initiatives.



ARTS  
ADVOCACY DAY  
THE 2007 NATIONAL ARTS ACTION SUMMIT



Americans for the Arts Action Fund has a long history of working with recently announced presidential candidate Mike Huckabee. He's seen here addressing advocates at our 2005 Arts Advocacy Day Congressional Arts Breakfast as the winner of the 2005 Governors Arts Leadership Award.

## Message from the President



Robert L. Lynch  
President and CEO  
Americans for the Arts Action Fund

The arts community is off to an active start here in Washington, DC, in 2007.

The makeup of our new Congress has brought some of the strongest arts supporters in our nation into key committee leadership positions. I'm confident that these changes, combined with your ongoing support of the Arts Action Fund's expertise and focused work, will lead to positive action for the arts at the federal level in 2007.

Hundreds of dedicated arts advocates from across the country received legislative training and shared ideas

for how to strengthen the arts during Arts Advocacy Day 2007: The National Arts Action Summit, March 12-13. Then we took our message to Capitol Hill, where activists met with members of Congress to share their hopes and plans for the arts in their communities and nationwide. Look for highlights of this conference in the next issue of the newsletter.

In conjunction with Arts Advocacy Day, Americans for the Arts presented the 20th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy. This year's speaker was Robert MacNeil, the renowned broadcast journalist of PBS's *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* and

chairman of the MacDowell Colony for artists. MacNeil's lecture focused on creating a fertile environment to support artists, artist residencies, and cultural diplomacy. All Action Fund members should have received a postcard with instructions on how to order complimentary tickets for the lecture. A podcast of the lecture is available online at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/rss/podcasts.asp](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/rss/podcasts.asp).

Thanks for your support of the Arts Action Fund.

## Shaping Federal Arts Policy

The Arts Action Fund monitors arts policy at the federal level and helps bring citizens' voices to the table when important arts issues are debated. For detailed legislative updates for each of these items, please visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews).

### Strong Arts Supporters Head Key Congressional Committees

New committee leadership in both the House and Senate bodes well for the arts in 2007. In fact, the chairs of all of the major appropriations committees in the House are arts leaders who earned "A" grades on our 2006 Congressional Arts Report Card. Rep. David Obey (D-WI) will chair the House full Appropriations Committee and the Education Subcommittee. Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA) will chair the Appropriations Interior Subcommittee, which funds both the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) is the chair of the Ways and Means Committee and Rep. George Miller (D-CA) chairs Education and Labor, which is in charge of rewriting No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

In the Senate, longtime arts champions like Sens. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

now chair key committees. Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV), who has actively pushed to increase NEA and NEH funding, now chairs the Senate full Appropriations Committee. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), who has been a champion of arts education funding for many years, is now the chair of the Appropriations Education Subcommittee. We look forward to a year of strong action for the arts working with these congressional leaders.

### Presidential Budget a Mixed Bag for the Arts

When President Bush released his FY 2008 budget in February, the news for the arts community was mixed. For the first time in three years, the president proposed an increase (3.2 percent) for the NEA, while the NEH would get a much smaller raise. Unfortunately, for the seventh consecutive year, the budget eliminated funding for the Department of Education's Arts in Education programs. A cut of \$50 million was proposed for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

# Supporting Arts Advocacy in the States

## Early Outlook for the Arts in the States in 2007

As governors nationwide began releasing their annual budgets in the beginning of 2007, the early trend was positive for the arts. As of early February, seven out of nine state budgets proposed increases in arts funding, with one state level-funding the arts and only one state proposing a decrease. Among the highlights, New York Governor Eliot Spitzer proposed a \$5 million increase; Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell's budget called for \$15 million over two years in new funding for creating, preserving, promoting, and expanding nonprofit arts and cultural activities in the state; and Missouri Governor Matt Blunt added \$4.5 million for the Missouri Arts Council.

Other state trends include a variety of bills ranging from hotel/motel taxes to support the arts to motion picture tax credits that would bring more film business to the state. Several states are also considering establishing new arts and cultural districts.

## First-Ever State Legislator Arts Leadership Award

For her leadership and dedication to arts education, Utah State Representative Sheryl L. Allen was awarded the inaugural 2006 State Legislator Arts Leadership Award from Americans for the Arts and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Rep. Allen was nominated by the Utah Arts Council for her vocal support of the arts and arts education, her active role in local arts



Americans for the Arts Director of State Arts Policy Jay Dick (l) and Executive Director of the Texas Commission on the Arts and Americans for the Arts Board Member Ricardo Hernandez (r) present Utah State Representative Sheryl L. Allen with the 2006 State Legislator Arts Leadership Award.

events, and her support of the arts professionally and through her legislative endeavors. The award was presented on December 7, at NCSL's Fall Forum in San Antonio, TX, by Americans for the Arts Board Member Ricardo Hernandez.

"Now it is our responsibility to carry forth that vision of a new America into the 21st century. A new America that seizes the future and forges 21st-century solutions through discovery, creativity, and innovation."



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi outlined the importance of the arts for the future of the country and the economy in her historic inaugural speech.

## Taking Action at the **Local** Level

### Money for the Arts in Fort Worth

Arts advocates and city officials in Fort Worth, TX, are considering a hotel occupancy tax and other methods of generating dedicated public financing for the arts in the city. Flora Maria Garcia, president of the Arts Council of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, relied on Americans for the Arts research to prepare a white paper for City Council members that compared public-sector arts funding in Fort Worth with other cities nationwide. "Whether or not we are successful in increasing the hotel occupancy tax," said Garcia, "we have been successful in shifting the thinking of our elected officials. Because of our advocacy efforts, both the public and private sector are buying into the fact that the city has a responsibility to fund the arts in a significant way."

### Los Angeles County Arts Commission Budget Doubles

More than \$4.5 million was awarded to the L.A. County Arts Commission for FY 2006, doubling the FY 2005 amount. More than 250 arts organizations will realize increases in funding from the county, allowing them to offer more free events, reach more underserved families, bring more artists into the public schools, and increase compensation for artists and arts administrators. The L.A. County Arts Commission is the second oldest municipal arts agency in California. In addition to its grants program, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support arts education, arts internships, and much more.



1000 VERMONT AVENUE, NW  
SIXTH FLOOR  
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

# Your Quarterly Arts Action Fund Newsletter

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Your PAC Membership Matters!

Americans for the Arts Action Fund and its connected PAC add a new dimension to arts advocacy in the United States by providing a vehicle through which any citizen can help ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in the arts. Additional information about the Americans for the Arts Action Fund, including information on how to join, is available at [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org). Arts Action News is delivered four times a year exclusively to supporters of the Arts Action Fund. Questions? Please call 202.371.2830.



PAC by visiting our website at [www.ArtsActionFund.org/PAC](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org/PAC). Encourage your friends, colleagues, and family members to join. Together, we are making a difference for the arts. And together we can make an even greater difference in 2008.

The Arts Action Fund is growing! Our membership numbers have nearly doubled over the past year. We now have more than 20,000 members. Please continue to support the Arts Action Fund, and help us grow our powerful network of arts activists nationwide.

In the 2006 election cycle, our members made a difference. Americans for the Arts Action Fund PAC contributions helped elect many leaders for the arts, including Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD). As congressman, Sen. Cardin earned the highest rating, an "A+," from the Arts Action Fund's Congressional Arts Report Card. Sen. Cardin told us, "Because of you... we were able to finance the type of campaign that we knew would be necessary to win."

Now just imagine what we can accomplish in the 2008 elections! Please support the Arts Action Fund!

## Your PAC Membership Matters!



PAC Update