

# Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. I 2009

## The Arts = Jobs

Congratulations! The Arts Action Fund advocacy network helped secure support for the arts in the economic stimulus bill that President Obama signed on February 17, 2009. Fifty million dollars in direct support for arts jobs and millions more in indirect support for arts infrastructure projects are included within this \$789 billion economic recovery package.

Achieving this policy outcome was not easy. It took high-profile arts leadership as well as massive grassroots mobilization. It took indisputable research data on the economic impact of the arts. But most importantly, it took our collective passion to make the case to legislators and the media that an investment in the arts is an investment in jobs.

Our messaging campaign first began in early January when Americans for the

Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert Lynch met with the Obama transition team, congressional leaders, and the press to discuss our nine-point recommendation report. We laid the foundation for the arts to be part of a national stimulus bill that would specifically provide assistance to the many nonprofit arts organizations hurt by the recent economic downturn.

Americans for the Arts and the Arts Action Fund launched "The Arts = Jobs" advocacy campaign to help turn our policy recommendations into law. We worked closely with congressional leaders to assist them in educating their colleagues in Congress about the economic impact of the arts. While our efforts resulted in many of our recommendations being incorporated into the House bill, we ran into roadblocks in the Senate.

**THE ARTS = JOBS**  
 5.7 million jobs  
 100,000 nonprofit Arts Organizations  
 612,000 Arts-Centric Businesses  
 4.3% of all American Businesses  
 \$29.6 billion in Tax Revenue  
 \$166.2 billion Total Economic Impact  
 Keep support for arts jobs in the economic recovery bill.

Americans for the Arts, Americans for the Arts Action Fund, Arts & Business Council, Business Committee for the Arts, Performing Arts Alliance, Obama Policy Advisory Board, National Academy of Arts and Letters, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Performing Arts, National Endowment for the Visual Arts and Culture (NEVAAC), www.ArtsActionFund.org • 202.371.2020 • info@artsactionfund.org

In an attempt to convince lawmakers that "The Arts = Jobs" and that funds to support arts jobs were needed in the economic stimulus bill, Americans for the Arts and the Arts Action Fund strategically timed placement of this full-page ad in top political journals Roll Call, Politico, and The Hill.

Many conservative lawmakers, media pundits, and even late night talk show hosts hailed attacks on the arts, framing arts and culture funding as frivolous. We purchased full-page ads in top political journals. The response was overwhelming and because of all this hard work, the arts are part of our nation's road to economic recovery.

## Obama Speaks Out on the Arts

Before his inauguration, President Obama spoke to Tom Brokaw on *Meet the Press* on December 7, 2008. Among the important policies then President-Elect Obama outlined was his intention to promote arts and culture through the White House. President Obama said he was, "thinking about the diversity of our culture and inviting jazz musicians and classical musicians and poetry readings to the White House, so that, once again, we appreciate this incredible tapestry that's America." After his appearance, Obama's Economic



In his first Sunday morning television appearance after the election, President-Elect Obama discussed his intention to promote arts and culture through the White House.

Recovery Plan, which was quickly sent to Congress for debate, included new job stimulus funds for the arts.

That interview was Obama's first Sunday morning television appearance since winning the presidential election, and it was a moment every arts advocate can be proud of. You and thousands of arts advocates helped elevate the arts to the center of our national agenda, worthy of the attention of our new president and the media.

## Message from the President

Americans for the Arts Action Fund represents you—artists, arts advocates, art lovers, and arts and culture organizations. As our country faces an economic crisis and new political leaders transition to power at the federal level and in states nationwide, we have never been more active or more dedicated to our duty as your arts advocate at the national level.

I'm happy to report that when I met with the Obama transition team in January, they listened attentively and were eager to hear our suggestions about how the arts can play an important role in revitalizing America's economy. I emphasized the fact that our country's 100,000 nonprofit arts groups employ more

than five million people and contribute \$167 billion to our economy. And I urged the transition team to incorporate support for the arts into the national economic recovery plan.

The fact that just one month later President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan—which included millions of dollars for job recovery and infrastructure projects for the arts—shows remarkable follow-through on his campaign pledge to use the White House bully pulpit to advance the arts in America.

None of this good news happened by accident or by luck. It happened



Americans for the Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert L. Lynch praises The United States Conference of Mayors for including support for the arts and the appointment of a senior-level arts policy position at the White House within its 10-point plan for a better America.

because 85,000 of our grassroots advocates contacted their congressional leaders at the right time with the right message about the importance of supporting the arts in the economic stimulus package. Together, we have made enormous progress. Your voices are being heard. Thank you for playing your part!

### New Republican Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus

We're pleased to welcome Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA) as the new Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus. Current Co-Chair Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY)

extended the invitation to Rep. Platts to succeed Rep. Chris Shays (R-CT), a longtime ally of the arts and friend of Americans for the Arts who was not re-elected last November. Rep. Platts is the highest-ranking Republican on the subcommittee responsible for authorizing federal cultural agencies. Rep. Platts has received consistent "A" grades on the Arts Action Fund's Congressional Arts Report

Card. Rep. Platts has said, "If the United States is to compete effectively in the global economy, we will do so based on our creativity, ingenuity, and innovation. Through stories, songs, and images, the arts give us a unique method by which we can better understand the world and people around us."

Photo courtesy of the Office of Congressman Todd Russell Platts



Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA) will serve as the new Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus.

## 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, please visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews).

### Proven Arts Supporters Move to Key Posts in 111th Congress

Two Republican Congress members with solid track records of support for the arts have been selected for top posts in their party on subcommittees important to cultural funding. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) takes over as the Ranking Member on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, which funds the cultural agencies, like the National Endowment for the Arts. He replaces Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R-KS), who now becomes Ranking Member on the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, which funds the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Institute for Museum and Library Services, and Arts in Education programs.

Photo courtesy of Americans for the Arts



Members like you helped elect key new arts leaders in 2008, like pro-arts Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ) shown here with Associate Director of Federal Affairs for Americans for the Arts Action Fund Gladstone Payton at her swearing-in ceremony on January 6, 2009.

# Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

## Advocating for Local Arts Funding

Arts organizations are being faced with daunting funding cuts in communities across the country. Here are examples of how some cities are fighting back.

- In Oakland, CA, arts advocates helped block a proposed \$1.4 million cut in city cultural funding. Hundreds of people packed city council chambers on October 21, 2008, where arts advocates spoke about how the arts can prevent crime and violence and raise student test scores. When the council agreed not to cut arts funding, the packed crowd rose for a 10-minute standing ovation.
- In Phoenix, AZ, nearly 700 residents attended the first of 13 budget meetings on January 1, 2009, to urge city officials to spare vital programs and services. Arts supporters spoke out against the possible closure of the Shemer Arts Center and a proposed 70 percent cut in funding for the Phoenix Center for the Arts. Advocates also offered proposals to offset costs, including public-private partnerships and higher membership fees and taxes to preserve arts funding.

## Awarding Public Leadership in the Arts

For the thirteenth consecutive year, Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors presented the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards at the mayors' winter conference on January 19, 2009, in Washington, DC. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger received the State Arts Leadership Award for supporting a \$600 million increase in funding for arts education in 2006.

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels received the Local Arts Leadership Award for his work promoting the arts in Seattle, which boasts the country's highest number of arts-related businesses per capita. Artist-Citizen awards were also presented to actress Kerry Washington and actor Hill Harper.



(L-R) Executive Director of The United States Conference of Mayors Tom Cochran; Trenton (NJ) Mayor Douglas Palmer; Miami Mayor Manny Diaz; Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann; California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger; Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels; Burnsville (MN) Mayor Elizabeth Kautz; Americans for the Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert L. Lynch; and actress Kerry Washington after the presentation of the State Arts Leadership Award to Gov. Schwarzenegger at The U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Winter Meeting in Washington, DC.

## Fighting for the Arts in State Budgets

With the 50 states facing \$200 billion in deficits during the next two years, state arts councils are facing severe cuts across the country. The Americans for the Arts State Arts Action Network (SAAN) is a vital resource for arts advocacy groups fighting to save their funding. Here are just a few examples of how SAAN member organizations are responding:

- ArtPride New Jersey brought together prominent arts, business, and government leaders to discuss "New Jersey Arts at a Crossroads" on November 13, 2008.
- NYS Arts in New York brought busloads of activists to Albany, NY, to speak out for protection of arts funding in the state budget on Arts Day, February 3, 2009.
- South Dakotans for the Arts is campaigning hard to save the South Dakota Arts Council, which was the first state arts council budget proposed for elimination this year among state budgets across the country.

## In the News

### *The New York Times*

On January 29, 2009, *The New York Times* ran an article on the front page of the arts section about efforts among arts and culture leaders to make sure the arts are included in economic recovery plans. Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch was quoted extensively: "We wanted to make sure arts were not left out of the recovery," said Lynch. "The artist's paycheck is every bit as important as the steelworker's paycheck or the autoworker's paycheck."

### *Washington Post*

Lynch was also quoted in the January 14, 2009, edition of the *Washington Post*: "We are calling for a person at the executive office level who understands there is a National Endowment for the Arts, but also understands the arts programs in the Education Department, the State Department..."

### *Morning Edition & L.A. Times*

On January 14, 2009, the *L.A. Times* reported on Lynch's meetings with the Obama transition team to discuss arts policy, and on January 16, 2009, Lynch was interviewed on NPR's *Morning Edition* about Obama's arts policy.



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## Your Quarterly Arts Action Fund Newsletter

### In this Issue:

#### Page 1

The Arts = Jobs

Obama Speaks Out on the Arts

#### Page 2

New Republican Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus

#### Page 3

Advocating for Local Arts Funding

Fighting for the Arts in State Budgets

#### Page 4

Arts PAC Fundraising Goal Achieved

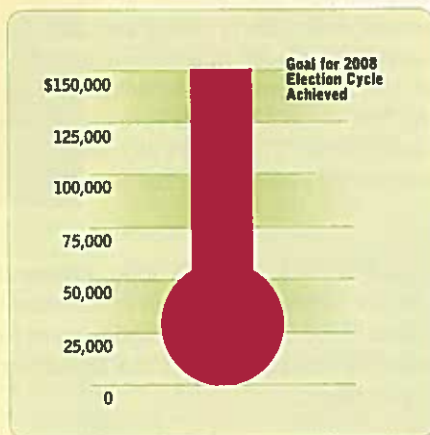
Arts Action Fund Members Vote on 2009 Legislative Priorities

## PAC Update



### Arts PAC Fundraising Goal Achieved!

Thanks to strong support from members like you, we met our PAC fundraising goal and were able to support more than 120 pro-arts candidates for Congress in the 2008 elections. Our donations of more than \$70,000 to candidates in all 50 states helped raise the profile of the arts and arts education in the elections. We're already seeing the resulting increased focus on the arts in the 111th Congress. Thank you for your commitment and support.



ArtsVote2008 Campaign Fundraising Goal

### Arts Action Fund Members Vote on 2009 Legislative Policies

In March, Arts Action Fund members were asked to vote on the policy platform that will guide the Arts Action Fund's legislative priorities for the coming year. The Arts Action Fund Board of Directors unanimously recommended two policy positions to the membership for final adoption. The official policy platform of the Arts Action Fund was announced as part of Arts Advocacy Day: The 2009 National Arts Action Summit on March 30, 2009, in Washington, DC.

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Americans for the Arts. We engage citizens in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value and participate in the arts. Arts Action Fund members are citizen activists who are committed to helping make certain that arts-friendly public policies are adopted at every level of government. Arts Action News is delivered four times a year to supporters of the Arts Action Fund. Executive Director, Nina Ozlu Tunceli. [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org).