

# Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. IV 2009

## Fighting for the Arts in States Nationwide

We all know these are tough times for state arts agencies. But how bad is it? At least half of America's state arts agencies saw funding cuts in 2009.

Some states—including Pennsylvania and Michigan—even faced the possibility that their state arts agencies would be completely eliminated. Other states have seen arts budgets cut from 30 percent to 70 percent or more, including Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Nevada, and Ohio. However, in some states, advocacy efforts have made a vital difference—perhaps most notably in Pennsylvania.

Advocates also defended the arts against a last-minute effort by legislators to apply a sales tax on nonprofit performing arts tickets, which would have driven ticket prices up by at least six percent. Constant vigilance and well-organized grassroots advocacy by Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania and other organizations protected the arts from even further financial peril.



Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance  
Strong turnout from arts advocates helped secure nearly \$12 million for grants and administration for nonprofit arts groups in Pennsylvania. Here, state Sens. Daylin Leach, Larry Farnese, and Mike Stack address the crowd of arts advocates at a rally.

When faced with a zero-dollar budget for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, arts supporters spoke out across the state and educated citizens about the importance of the arts, ultimately securing nearly \$12 million in funding for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Arts advocates rallied in Philadelphia and successfully defeated a proposed statewide sales tax on tickets to nonprofit arts events.

As we look forward to the coming opportunities and challenges in 2010, make sure the arts are part of your community and help us ensure they're part of our nation! Visit [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org) to find all the ways to get involved.

## Arts and Healthcare: The Facts

A growing number of extreme right-wing bloggers and journalists seem determined to start a new kind of culture war. At Americans for the Arts, we recently found ourselves pulled into the center of these assaults when individuals from *The Washington Times* to George F. Will to Glenn Beck falsely accused the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) of inappropriately pushing NEA-funded arts organizations to advocate for President Obama's healthcare reform agenda.

These right-wing bloggers and journalists went on to falsely claim that Americans for the Arts supported healthcare reform legislation at the urging of the NEA. There is no truth to this. In fact, our longstanding legislative position on healthcare reform has always been that artists and nonprofit arts organizations should have access to affordable health insurance. Americans for the Arts worked with a coalition of nonprofit groups, and not the NEA, to voice

concerns about healthcare reform on behalf of the nonprofit arts community nationwide. This entire series of media attacks on the NEA was fueled by one blogger's inaccurate accounts and misrepresentations. Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch responded with a Letter to the Editor to *The Washington Times* and several other media outlets, denouncing the poor journalism and setting the record straight. To read his letter, visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/sc/washingtontimes](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/sc/washingtontimes).

No matter what the right-wing culture warriors throw at us, Americans for the Arts and the Arts Action Fund won't be bullied into backing down. You can count on us to continue fighting for better healthcare options for artists and arts organizations and standing up to those who try to undermine and the work we all do together.

## Message from the President

Americans for the Arts is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2010, and one of things I'm most proud of is the creation of the Arts Action Fund in 2004. Since then, we have built a nationwide citizen army of arts advocates that is transforming the way our elected officials—and all Americans—think about the arts. Our organization has grown to include 150,000 advocates, and our combined voices are making a difference.

Among our accomplishments this year was successfully advocating for \$50 million to help save nonprofit arts jobs in President Obama's economic stimulus plan and a seven percent increase in the National Endowment for the Arts budget.

We also held our largest Arts Advocacy Day event ever on Capitol Hill and launched The Arts. Ask for More. arts education PSA campaign. We couldn't have done any of this without you.

As we look back on this challenging but very rewarding year, I want to urge everyone to keep up your strong support for the arts and arts education in your communities. Funding is down from all grant sources and so are individual donations and ticket sales. In the coming year, please help your community by making donations, purchasing tickets to arts events, and supporting artists.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the passing of one of the greatest legislators of all time and a powerful advocate for the arts, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. Sen. Kennedy was the founder and



Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and President and CEO of Americans for the Arts Robert L. Lynch at the Americans for the Arts 17th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy in 2004. Sen. Kennedy was a longtime friend of Americans for the Arts, and he shared our commitment to the importance of the arts in America's life and culture.

co-chair of the Senate Cultural Caucus, and he stood with us many times in demanding federal support for the arts and arts education. We were proud to honor his commitment with our 1999 Congressional Arts Leadership Award. Sen. Kennedy's devotion to, and passionate defense of, the arts and freedom of expression made him a powerful advocate and an inspiration to us all. We are all diminished by his loss.

1960 - 2010  YEARS

**REGISTER NOW!**

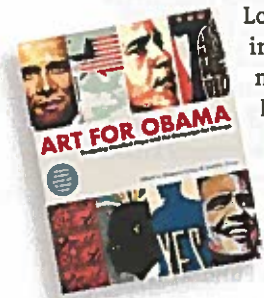
**Arts Advocacy Day 2010**

Washington, DC

April 12-13, 2010

[www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD)

### Art for Obama Book to Benefit the Arts



Looking for another way to support the arts in America? Purchase a copy of the inspiring new book *Art for Obama: Designing Manifest Hope and the Campaign for Change* by Shepard Fairey and Jennifer Gross. All authors' net proceeds from the book will be donated to Americans for the Arts. The book features artwork inspired by Obama's presidential campaign, including Shepard Fairey's iconic *Hope* portrait. It makes a great

holiday gift for the artists and dreamers on your list. You can purchase the book through the Americans for the Arts Online Store at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Store](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Store) or by calling 800.321.4510.

### A Special Thank You to Our 2009 Arts Action Fund Partners

We want to thank the following arts service organizations for partnering with us in 2009 to help grow our citizen army of grassroots arts advocates.

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Academy of American Poets             | Craft Emergency Relief Fund                              |
| Alliance of Artists Communities       | International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians |
| American Art Therapy Association      | Music Educators National Conference                      |
| American Choral Directors Association | Music Teachers National Association                      |
| American String Teachers Association  | National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture             |
| Art Dealers Association of America    | National Arts Education Association                      |
| ArtTable                              | NW Presenters  |
| Arts for LA                           |  |
| Chorus America                        |  |



# 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).

## National Endowment for the Arts to Receive a \$12.5 Million Boost

On October 30, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the FY 2010 budget for the Department of the Interior into law, which resulted in a \$12.5 million funding increase (from 2009's budget of \$155 million) for both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Both agencies are now funded at \$167.5 million each. The final budget represents a compromise between the \$170 million that was in the House version of the bill and the \$161 million in the Senate version, which was also the amount requested by the White House. Once again, your arts advocacy efforts are making a difference for hundreds of cultural organizations across the country.

## A Voice for the Arts in Healthcare Reform

Americans for the Arts Action Fund and a coalition of national arts organizations issued a statement in August urging Congress to address healthcare costs and coverage issues for artists and nonprofit arts organizations in any proposed legislation. Artists and nonprofit arts administrators are among the highest population group of those without healthcare insurance. You can read the full statement on our website at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/press/2009](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/press/2009), and of course, we will keep you up-to-date as healthcare reform legislation makes its way through Congress.

## White House Issues Official Proclamation for National Arts and Humanities Month

Held every October and coordinated by Americans for the Arts, National Arts and Humanities Month (NAHM) is the largest annual celebration of the arts and humanities in the nation. This is the first time in history that NAHM has been recognized with an official presidential proclamation. By issuing this historic public statement in his first year in office, President Obama has taken this opportunity to recognize that "The arts and humanities contribute to the vibrancy of our society and the strength of our democracy, and during National Arts and Humanities Month, we recommit ourselves to ensuring all Americans can access and enjoy them." To read the entire proclamation, visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/NAHM](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/NAHM).

# Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

## Billboards Promote Arts Education in Tennessee

Billboards promoting arts education in Tennessee schools have gone up statewide from Chattanooga to Memphis and everywhere in between. The billboards encourage Tennesseans to get involved in supporting the arts in schools. The campaign is a joint project of the Tennessee Arts Commission, Tennesseans for the Arts, and the Outdoor Advertising Association of Tennessee.

## Donations Soar in Michigan Online Drive

A joint program by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the Cultural Alliance of Southeastern Michigan recently generated \$4.8 million in support of 75 arts and culture organizations through an online pledge drive. The Community Foundation donated \$1 for every \$2 gift made by private donors, and 100 percent of the money raised went directly to participating nonprofit arts organizations.

## Local Arts Advocates to the Rescue

As the recession continues, cities and counties across the country are also facing arts funding cuts. But arts advocates have been successful in protecting or substantially restoring funding in several localities. In Miami-Dade County, FL, the Board of County Commissioners restored more than \$8.6 million to the Department of Cultural Affairs after arts advocates turned out en masse at public hearings. Similarly, efforts to protect arts funding in Corpus Christi, TX, ended in a standing ovation by more than 100 arts advocates when the city council announced that a \$433,000 proposed cut to arts institutions would not occur.



Tennesseans will be inspired to get art back in the schools with new eye-catching PSA ads. These billboards, which will be up for at least a year, are being strategically placed in high-traffic areas across the state and will serve as a visual reminder to make the arts central to learning in Tennessee schools.

