

# Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. II 2010

## Arts Build Communities: National Arts Advocacy Day 2010

As part of Arts Advocacy Day 2010, Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors presented the 2010 Congressional Arts Leadership Award to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) in recognition of her vocal support for pro-arts legislation during the Congressional Arts Kick Off on April 13, 2010. Speaker Pelosi thanked arts advocates for their hard work and concluded by saying, "Investment in the arts is a critical investment in our country."

Renowned actors Jeff Daniels and Kyle MacLachlan also joined us to call on Congress to support this year's arts advocacy policy platform positions as voted on and approved by you, our Arts Action Fund members. A record-breaking 550 grassroots arts advocates urged their members of Congress to increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and reauthorize arts education programs.

Even arts advocates who couldn't join us in Washington, DC, sent messages in support of increased arts funding to Congress

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi received the 2010 Congressional Arts Leadership Award from President and CEO of Americans for the Arts Robert L. Lynch (left) and CEO of The U.S. Conference of Mayors Tom Cochran (right).



through our E-Advocacy Center. Americans for the Arts Artists Committee Members Yoko Ono, Josh Groban, and John Legend also brought attention to Arts Advocacy Day remotely by spreading a pro-arts message to millions of their fans and followers on Twitter.

For more information, photos, and video from Arts Advocacy Day, please visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/AAD](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/AAD) recap.

## Mayor of Charleston on Revitalizing Cities through the Arts



Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK), formerly mayor of Anchorage and a graduate of the Mayors' Institute on City Design (left), spoke with Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. (right) before introducing him on stage at the 23rd Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy.

Every mayor should strive to create beautiful cities—"places where every citizen's heart can sing." Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. of Charleston, SC, delivered this simple yet powerful message at the Americans for the Arts 23rd Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy, inspiring an audience of 1,400 arts advocates and arts lovers at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on April 12, 2010, the eve of Arts Advocacy Day.

Riley, a 2009 recipient of the National Medal of Arts for his leadership in the field of urban design and as a founder

of the Mayors' Institute on City Design, has challenged more than 800 mayors across the country to impact their communities through the arts.

"Let's get everyone involved, every city, every governor, every state Department of Transportation, every school district, every corporation...Our nation's success—cultural, social, and economic—depends on how great our towns and cities are."

To listen to Riley's complete lecture, visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/NHL\\_audio](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/NHL_audio).

## Message from the President

First of all, let me take a moment to congratulate everyone who was involved with Arts Advocacy Day this April. It was inspiring to see so many passionate advocates from across the country talking with their congressional leaders. Even if you weren't able to attend, I want to thank you for helping make this highly successful day possible through your generous support of Americans for the Arts Action Fund.

Among the day's highlights was the "Arts Build Communities" congressional hearing hosted by Rep. James P. Moran (D-VA), which you can read more about on page 3. Moran is the new chairman of the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, which oversees federal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. Moran has been a longtime supporter of funding

for the arts and arts education, and when I met with the new chairman and his staff on March 12, he assured me of his strong commitment to sustaining and growing federal arts funding.

I want you to know that the work we are doing together to build a nationwide movement of arts advocates is making a difference. We must continue to speak out in favor of arts and arts education programs—not just in the nation's capital, but in every congressional district, state capital, and city hall throughout the country. As you'll read in this newsletter, we've created the new 50 States 50 Days campaign in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Americans for the Arts. The campaign is designed to help arts advocates like you all over this nation



President and CEO of Americans for the Arts Robert L. Lynch (right) spoke with Chairman Jim Moran (D-VA) (left) after the conclusion of the "Arts Build Communities" hearing on Arts Advocacy Day. This was the first arts hearing that Rep. Moran convened since assuming leadership of the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations.

reach out to elected leaders during this summer's congressional recess, making our pro-arts voice heard at home as well as in Washington, DC.

Thank you again for your membership in Americans for the Arts Action Fund, and for all you do to keep the arts alive.



## 50 States 50 Days Campaign: Bring the Message Home

Americans for the Arts is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. To recognize this important milestone, the Arts Action Fund is doing what we do best: organizing! We're asking communities nationwide to raise awareness about the arts among members of Congress by inviting them to a local arts event this summer. Visit [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org) to get equipped with the tools and methods to help you reach out to your members of Congress from July 31–September 18, when they will likely be at home in their district or state during the congressional recess. Simply visit [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org) to learn more and get started!

## New Website Puts You at the Center of Arts Advocacy

The success of our arts advocacy movement depends on engaging as many people as possible all across the country. Americans for the Arts Action Fund has unveiled a new website to make it easier than ever for arts enthusiasts like you to interact with decision-makers and take action. The new site, [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org), is the hub of our movement. We hope you will visit regularly to let us know what you are doing in your community and learn about the pro-arts efforts under way down the street and across the country.

Right now, communities from coast to coast are battling cuts to arts education programs as state and local budgets tighten. You can read about some of these arts education conflicts on page 3. Then visit [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org) to let us know if arts education is under attack in your community and find out what others are doing to fight back.



[www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org)



# 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).

## Witnesses Share Their Arts Stories with Congress

Americans for the Arts assembled an exemplary panel of witnesses to testify before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations during Arts Advocacy Day. The seven witnesses, representing different sectors of support for the arts, spoke of the impact that the arts have on people's lives and advocated for increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.



Actor Jeff Daniels noted the economic impact the Purple Rose Theatre Company had on Chelsea, MI: "Where I live, the arts are a fundamental American asset, an essential element to our community's success," said Daniels. Army Brig. Gen. Nolen V. Bivens (ret.) discussed the potential for the arts community to

Actor Jeff Daniels's testimony centered on the professional nonprofit equity theater that he founded and directs, The Purple Rose Theatre Company, and how it has transformed his hometown of Chelsea, MI.

help the U.S. government manage national security challenges through innovative thinking and cultural diplomacy. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter reminded us that, "even in tough times, cultural organizations can be a catalyst to citizen engagement, workforce development, and a strong economy."

To watch videos of each of our seven witnesses testifying at the congressional hearing, please visit [www.ArtsActionFund.org/videos](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org/videos).



At the "Arts Build Communities" congressional hearing, Americans for the Arts witnesses testified before the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations: (L-R) Army Brig. Gen. Nolen V. Bivens (ret.), actor Kyle MacLachlan, Ranking Subcommittee Member Mike Simpson (R-ID), Minot Area Council of the Arts (ND) Executive Director Terri Aldrich, actor Jeff Daniels, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch, Subcommittee Chairman James P. Moran (D-VA), and Ovation TV CEO Charles Segars.

## Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

### Protecting Arts Education

School districts across the country are struggling to balance their budgets, and arts and music programs often end up on the chopping block. Nationwide, parents, community members, and arts advocates are organizing to protect the arts.

Nearly 500 people packed into the Iowa Capitol in early March to demand the restoration of music and arts programs in the Des Moines School District's 2010–2011 budget. These advocacy efforts resonated with the state legislature, which agreed to increase the Iowa Department of Education's budget by two percent. The school board reinstated 24 of the 40 music teacher positions that had been scheduled for elimination.

In New York state, the Katonah-Lewisboro Union Free School District's budget meetings drew more than 100 parents, students, teachers, and residents in defense of arts and music programs. To address the advocates' concerns, the school board proposed a tax increase to help mitigate the budget shortfalls and reinstate the

programs. Unfortunately for the arts, the community voted against the proposed tax increase when it was put on a public ballot.

Advocates in California's Vista Unified School District succeeded in reinstating funding for the elementary music program in the 2010–2011 budget. However, 62 of the teachers retained will not have their contracts renewed.

In the Moline-Coal Valley School District of Illinois, a coordinated campaign of e-mails, letters, and citizens standing to speak at budget hearings helped to save the fifth grade band program—at least for now. If the district's financial situation doesn't improve, the program may not survive next year.

Advocacy efforts like these are getting results all across the country. As we continue to monitor arts education developments and lend assistance wherever possible, let us know what's happening in your community and find out more about the effort to keep arts in schools at [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org).

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## PAC Update



### ArtsVote2010: Ask Your Candidates

The Arts Action Fund is ready with the information and resources you need to make the November 2010 elections count by electing pro-arts candidates. Visit the **ArtsVote2010** section of [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org) to find information on candidates and their positions on the arts and arts education. Check to see if candidates in your area have answered our arts policy questionnaire and find out how to get in touch with their offices to encourage them to fill out the survey if they haven't already. If they haven't, get in touch with the candidates' offices to encourage them to fill out the survey. We've even compiled arts-related questions you can ask decision-makers in your community to help bring the arts to the forefront in local elections: [www.ArtsActionFund.org/pages/ask-your-candidate](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org/pages/ask-your-candidate).

Also learn how your senators have voted on arts-related issues by checking out the Congressional Report Card at [www.ArtsActionFund.org/pages/congressional-report-card](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org/pages/congressional-report-card).



(L-R) Actor and arts advocate Kyle MacLachlan with Arts Action Fund Board Members Ken Ferguson, Ann Sheffer, and Steve Spiess at the Arts Advocacy Day fundraiser for the Arts Action Fund PAC.

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 and in the private sector. 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).



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