

Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. III 2010

50 States 50 Days: Arts Advocacy in Your District

Throughout the late summer, arts advocates across the country hosted events in their communities to demonstrate to members of Congress that voters in their districts want arts and arts education funding on the legislative agenda in Washington, DC.

Americans for the Arts Action Fund launched this campaign, 50 States 50 Days, to encourage arts advocates nationwide to increase awareness of the arts in their hometowns and in Congress. By organizing the campaign during the congressional recess, participants were able to reach their members of Congress in their home districts. The Arts Action Fund

equipped participants with all the tools necessary to reach out to their congressional representatives.

In New York, the Dutchess County Arts Council partnered with the Woodstock Artists Association and NYS ARTS to present a panel discussion with Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Paul Tonko (D-NY) on the future of the arts in education.

"Events like these provide an opportunity to publicly engage with our elected representatives on their home turf for the hometown crowd," said Benjamin Krevolin of the Dutchess County Arts Council. "And because these are not



At a 50 States 50 Days event, members of the Broward County Cultural Division in Florida thank U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Shultz (D-FL) for her work in securing federal stimulus funds which saved 47 local arts jobs.

isolated events but part of a nationwide initiative, it creates more visibility for the importance of arts issues."

Visit the 50 States 50 Days section of www.ArtsActionFund.org to read more about advocates' efforts and what you can do to continue the pro-arts message this fall.

Educate Yourself and Your Community For Election Day



This fall, make an informed decision at the ballot box. To ensure lasting support for the arts and arts education, arts supporters need to elect pro-arts members of Congress. Americans for the Arts Action Fund is providing you with the tools you need to do just that, and they're all available in the ArtsVote section of our website, www.ArtsActionFund.org. Here are just a few ways you can get involved:

- Use our 2010 Congressional Arts Report Card, which grades current members of Congress based on their voting records on arts-related legislation,

to help you make informed decisions at the ballot box. Spread the message to other arts-supporters in your community.

- Learn what candidates have to say about the arts in our Candidates' Survey on the Arts. You can also find suggested questions to ask candidates at local events to learn more about their arts positions.

Message from the President

One of highlights of my summer was the Americans for the Arts Half-Century Summit in Baltimore this June. Nearly 1,000 arts leaders from across the nation gathered to

In his stirring remarks, Ashong called on all of us, especially young people, to get involved in building a movement for the arts. "We can actually change the world, and the way in which we change the world is not necessarily through the mechanisms that people expect, but it's through having the ability to think creatively enough to shift our position, to shift where we stand, so that other people can understand where we're coming from and why it matters."

As an Americans for the Arts Action Fund member, you are already a vital part of this movement, and I'm deeply grateful for your commitment to the arts. Together we are building an arts advocacy movement that will be too powerful for our leaders to ignore.

This fall we have another opportunity to make our pro-arts voice heard on Capitol Hill—by electing more candidates who support the arts, as well as supporting arts leaders in their bids for reelection. The Action Fund PAC has already provided critical support to some of our arts champions like Sen. Kirsten

Gillibrand (D-NY), who received an A+ on our *Congressional Arts Report Card*, and Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), a consistent friend of the arts who is facing a tough race in California. We're also educating voters across the country about how their candidates have voted on the arts.

Visit the ArtsVote 2010 section of www.ArtsActionFund.org for updated information on candidates throughout the coming months. Help spread the word about your candidates' arts voting records in your community and encourage your friends and colleagues to join the Arts Action Fund. We're well on our way to our goal of one million activists for the arts, but we're not there yet.

Thank you for doing your part. I am immensely grateful for you and proud to be working with you in support of the arts in America.



Americans for the Arts Action Fund Executive Director Nina Ozlu Tunceli (left) and President and CEO Robert L. Lynch (right) with arts educator and activist Derrick Ashong at the Americans for the Arts Action Fund Briefing at the Half-Century Summit in Baltimore this June.

learn from our brilliant speakers and from each other. One of the most inspiring events was the Arts Action Fund briefing with Derrick Ashong, arts educator, activist, and the host of *The Derrick Ashong Experience* on Oprah Radio.

Senate Letter Calls for Support of the NEA

Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) was so inspired at Arts Advocacy Day, he circulated a letter among his Senate colleagues in support of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Twenty senators signed the letter calling for the NEA to be funded at \$180 million for FY 2011—mirroring the amount called for by arts advocates and the Congressional Arts Caucus in the House. Senators who signed the letter were:

Sens. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Mark Begich (D-AK), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chris Dodd (D-CT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Tim Johnson (D-SD), John Kerry (D-MA), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Carl Levin (D-MI), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Jack Reed (D-RI), Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), Bernard Sanders (D-VT), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Tom Udall (D-NM), Ron Wyden (D-OR).

If your senator signed the letter, make sure to thank him or her through our E-Advocacy Center. Visit www.ArtsActionFund.org/pages/action-center to send your elected officials a message.

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.

Support for the Arts Growing in Congress

We're pleased to announce that immediately after Arts Advocacy Day in April, the Congressional Arts Caucus grew to its highest membership ever—233 representatives—up from 176 at the beginning of the year. The Congressional Arts Caucus is now one of the largest voluntary caucuses in the House of Representatives and can be counted on when action is needed on arts- and culture-related legislation. The Senate Cultural Caucus also saw a bump in membership from 30 members in 2009 to 38 members. Encourage your members of Congress to join these groups in support of the arts at www.ArtsActionFund.org/pages/action-center.

Does the Federal Spending Freeze Mean Cold Days for the Arts?

In July, President Obama and Congress agreed to a three-year freeze on all federal discretionary spending not related to defense. But thanks to excellent arts leadership on the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, the body that proposes the NEA's budget, the House recently passed an increase of \$2.5 million for the NEA. As a somewhat unclear legislative picture continues to unfold over the course of the next few months, remember to reach out to your members of Congress via our E-Advocacy Center and let them know that you support the arts!

Co-Chairs of the Congressional Arts Caucus Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (R-NY) testifying before the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations on Arts Advocacy Day 2009.



Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) is the new co-chair of the Senate Cultural Caucus. On Arts Advocacy Day in April, the senator announced she would be filling the vacancy left by the late Sen. Kennedy (D-MA).

Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

Advocacy Helps Limit State Arts Funding Cuts Across the Nation

When Georgia's House of Representatives voted to strip all funding for the Georgia Council for the Arts from the FY 2011 budget, advocates rallied. With their persuasion, the House restored \$790,735 in funding for the council.

In South Carolina, arts advocates protested Gov. Sanford's budget cut which gutted the state's arts and culture programs. In response to advocates and the South Carolina Arts Alliance, the legislature overrode Gov. Sanford's veto on the decision and reinstated \$1.2 million for the South Carolina Arts Commission.

Arts for LA Making Strides in Difficult Economy

Recently, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa proposed awarding all of the city's arts grants to only four hand-picked arts organizations. Arts for LA demonstrated the economic benefit of distributing the money more equitably, and convinced the mayor to widely distribute \$415,000 in grants.

This summer, Los Angeles schools faced a \$700 million deficit. The school board proposed to eliminate half of its elementary arts teachers this school year and the other half next year, effectively wiping out arts education. Arts for LA organized arts supporters who sent more than 1,500 letters to the school board. In response, the superintendent reduced the proposed cut, saving 53 arts educators' positions.

In Louisiana, Gov. Jindal proposed cutting arts funding for local parishes and statewide arts grants by more than 50 percent. The Louisiana Partnership for Arts Advocacy led advocates into action. Legislators received more than 115,000 messages in support of the arts. Those messages were heard and more than \$1 million of funding was restored.

Advocates in Columbia, SC, protested Gov. Sanford's proposed budget cuts that would have eliminated all state funds for arts grants, programs, services.





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In This Issue:

Page 1

50 States 50 Days: The Arts
in Your District

Page 2

Building Congressional Support
for the Arts

Page 3

Advocacy Efforts Saving State
and Local Arts Funding

Page 4

Supporting Pro-Arts Candidates

PAC Update



Pro-Arts Candidates Receive Arts Action Fund PAC Support

Americans for the Arts Action Fund PAC contributes to the campaigns of pro-arts candidates, and it's not too late for you to support our efforts. With our contributions, we send a message that the arts mean business. Your gift will help us maximize our influence in the final days before the elections, especially in some of the most closely contested races. There's still time for you to make a difference by making a contribution to the Arts Action Fund PAC at www.ArtsActionFund.org/donate.

To date, the following candidates have received Arts Action Fund PAC support for their fall 2010 campaigns (as of 7/27):

Rep. Ben Chandler (D-KY)	Rep. Paul Hodes (D-NH)	Rep. Jim Marshall (D-GA)	Rep. David Obey (D-WI)
Mayor David Cicilline* (D-RI)	Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ)	Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY)	Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA)	Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)	Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)	Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND)
Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA)	Rep. Mary Jo Kilroy (D-OH)	Rep. James Moran (D-VA)	Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY)
Rep. Chet Edwards (D-TX)	Rep. Anne Kirkpatrick (D-AZ)	Rep. Chris Murphy (D-CT)	Rep. John Spratt, Jr. (D-SC)
Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL)	Rep. Frank Kratovil (D-MD)	Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY)	Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY)
Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT)	Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)	Rep. Glenn Nye (D-VA)	

*Challenger for U.S. House of Representatives

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.



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