

# Arts Action News

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AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

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## Acclaimed Actors Advocate for the Arts to Congress

Acclaimed actors Alec Baldwin, Kevin Spacey, and Hill Harper joined more than 550 arts advocates from across the country on Capitol Hill for Arts Advocacy Day 2011. This year's event took place at a critical time when legislators were battling over program cuts to reduce the deficit.

The day began with the Congressional Arts Kick-Off where several members of Congress spoke to advocates about the importance of arts funding. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), who chairs the subcommittee with jurisdiction over funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Smithsonian, said that while some in Congress believe that government should not support the arts, "I respectfully disagree."

For the fifth year, Americans for the Arts assembled a panel of witnesses to testify before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee during Arts Advocacy Day. Witnesses gave their remarks before the gathered arts advocates and media at the Kick-Off. In his remarks, Alec Baldwin said he believes that those making cuts to the arts are speaking from an "old, very tired script" where they pretend not to remember the importance of the arts to children, seniors, our communities and "as seed money for business."

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



Arts Advocacy Day supporters Kevin Spacey (far left) and Alec Baldwin (far right) make the case for the arts in a meeting with Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-OH) (center left) and Chairman Mike Simpson (R-ID) (center right), Republican leaders of the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, which oversees funding for the arts.

## Kevin Spacey Delivers Nancy Hanks Lecture

Does government support for the arts matter? This was the central focus of the speech that Academy Award-winning actor and Artistic Director of the Old Vic Theatre Kevin Spacey delivered for the 24th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy. Presented by Americans for the Arts in partnership with Ovation, Kevin Spacey delivered his remarks on the eve of Arts Advocacy Day before an audience of more than 1,500 at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

In his speech, Kevin Spacey recounted growing up in Southern California and spoke of how, as a child, a theater workshop with actor Jack Lemmon helped him to find his voice and changed his life. From President Richard Nixon to poet Maya Angelou, he quoted leaders throughout history who have made the case for supporting the arts. Without public support for the arts, Mr. Spacey argued that we are focusing on the bricks and mortar and "ignoring the heart and soul of who we are as a country."

To watch Mr. Spacey's full lecture, please visit, [www.Ovationtv.com/Advocacy](http://www.Ovationtv.com/Advocacy).



Actor Kevin Spacey delivers the Americans for the Arts 24th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

# Message from the President

I'd like to share with you some reflections of the impact that we had on Arts Advocacy Day this year and a road map of what's to come. In a normal year, we would have been lobbying for the highest possible appropriations increase for arts that would impact the following year's budget. But there has been nothing normal this year on Capitol Hill.

As soon as the new Republican-controlled House of Representatives and Democrat-controlled Senate were sworn into office in January, members of Congress immediately began proposing retroactive cuts to core programs for the current 2011 fiscal year. Budget proposals included zeroing-out arts education funding and cutting the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) by 26 percent—from \$167 million to \$124 million.

Literally days before an impending government shutdown, we produced our largest national Arts Advocacy Day on April 5. Grassroots arts advocates hit the hallways of Congress and we secured a first-ever White House Briefing on the Arts to more deeply engage the Obama administration on cultural policy. I am pleased to say that we really made a difference! We helped restore more than half of the eliminated arts education funds and limited the cut to the NEA to only 7.5 percent.

But the fight is not over; we will soon be fighting off two more attempts to severely cut funding for the arts this year. This summer, the federal government will reach its maximum debt ceiling limit. And in the fall, the 2012 budget will be voted on. Tea party zealots are attempting



President and CEO Robert L. Lynch (right) met with the Ranking Democrat of the House Appropriations Committee Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA) on Arts Advocacy Day to discuss limiting cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts.

to link raising the ceiling and further budget negotiations with additional non-defense budget cuts that slash even deeper into such federal programs as the arts and arts education.

With your help, you can count on us to swiftly tackle these upcoming battles.

## Arts Advocacy Day Media Roundup

Advocates weren't just on Capitol Hill with us during Arts Advocacy Day. The Twitterverse was buzzing with more than 6,100 tweets and retweets sent out by advocates across the country. Several celebrities also lent their time to the cause and sent out messages that reached nearly three million of their followers.

Kevin Spacey made an appearance on MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews* and Alec Baldwin appeared on CNN, and both conveyed the importance of increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. The work of Spacey, Baldwin, Arts Advocacy Day Co-Chair and actress Kerry Washington, entertainment mogul Russell Simmons, and 550 more arts advocates also made headlines in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Variety*, the *Washington Post*, and CNN.

**@KevinSpacey**  
 167 million for funding the NEA is not "so much". This \$ generates match State funds, etc - which reaches 1 billion across US.

**@kerrywashington**  
 Pls RT "Two Minutes. That's all it takes to tell Congress you support the arts & arts education. [#Team AAD](http://bit.ly/d1jwxl)"

**@UncleRUSH**  
 RT @kerrywashington: Support the Arts & @americans4arts. Write Congress & tell them NOT to cut arts funding. [#aad11](http://bit.ly/d1jwxl)

# 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 and Arts Education Survive Deep Cuts in FY 2011 Budget Compromise

After six months of uncertainty and temporary stopgap funding measures, the budget process for FY 2011 finally came to a close and Congress averted a federal government shutdown. The final FY 2011 budget will fund the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at \$155 million until September 30, 2011. This level is down \$13 million from the previous year's appropriation of \$167 million. While this cut is significant, it is much better than the proposed cut of \$42 million which had originally passed in the House.

The U.S. Department of Education's Arts in Education (AIE) program went through a very rocky period in the appropriations process. In March, Congress approved a two-week budget that suddenly

terminated more than a dozen education programs, including the \$40 million arts education program, leaving 57 federal grantees without funding, and ending federal support for the national arts education programs at The John F. Kennedy Center and VSA, the international organization on arts and disability.

Just a week before the budget compromise, nearly 600 arts supporters descended on congressional offices on Arts Advocacy Day with the message that the larger proposed NEA cut and elimination of arts education programs would have a tremendous negative impact on jobs and arts education in their districts and states. In the end, the Arts in Education program was the only education program that was restored to \$25 million and the NEA received a much less severe cut.

Attention now turns to the FY 2012 appropriations cycle. The House recently

passed FY 2012 blueprint legislation that will serve as a guide for the different appropriations subcommittees in making promised large reductions in federal domestic spending. Continue to reach out to your legislators in Washington, DC to educate them about the impact of the arts in your community via our E-Advocacy Center at [www.capwiz.com/artsusa](http://www.capwiz.com/artsusa).



Notable arts advocates from Hollywood and Washington converge at the Congressional Arts Kick-Off to make their case for the protection of National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funds and arts education initiatives. L-R: Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI), NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman, actors Hill Harper and Kevin Spacey, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Reps. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and John Lewis (D-GA).

## Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

### States Not Spared in Budget Debates

Attempted attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and arts education programs were mirrored throughout the budget processes in states nationwide. Several governors proposed total elimination of their state arts agencies in the upcoming fiscal year, citing huge budget deficits and a need to drastically reduce spending. Kansas's newly elected Gov. Sam Brownback issued a line-item veto for the coming year's Kansas Arts Commission's budget after the Republican-dominated state legislature voted to appropriate almost \$700,000 for the agency. This makes Kansas the only state in the nation without a functioning state arts agency. The news was better in South Carolina and Washington, where the legislatures successfully defied gubernatorial attempts to gut the agencies. Florida also had a great success story, where the legislature successfully added \$2 million in new grant funds to the Department of Cultural Affairs. For more complete information on state arts funding, visit <http://bit.ly/SAANmap>.

Advocates in Wisconsin carry "Arts Are Part of the Solution" signs as they march on the state capitol. Already in the news for his anti-labor initiatives, Gov. Scott Walker also targeted the arts, proposing a severe cut to the Wisconsin Arts Board, and the elimination of the state's public art program and Poet Laureate.

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## PAC Update



### Kerry Washington Headlines Action Fund Reception

The Arts Action Fund PAC hosted a reception in conjunction with Arts Advocacy Day on April 4. Political activist and actress Kerry Washington (from *Ray* and *The Last King of Scotland*) joined more than 100 new and current Arts Action Fund members at the event. "The arts reframed my world and changed my idea of what I thought was possible," Ms. Washington said of her childhood experience in the arts, before addressing the challenges to the arts presented by sweeping budget cuts across the country. The reception raised a total of \$8,000 to support pro-arts candidates, but your help in the coming months will be critical to the goals of the Arts Action Fund PAC, the only PAC dedicated to advancing the arts in America. To help us make a difference in 2012, visit <https://secure.artsactionfund.org/page/contribute/pacdonate> to make a PAC donation.

*New Chairman of the Arts Action Fund Board of Directors Michael Verruto with Kerry Washington at the Arts Action Fund PAC reception during Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, DC. Mr. Verruto, whose appointment was approved by the board in March, is the managing director of HPI Capital and an active member of both the Charlotte and Philadelphia arts and business communities. He has served on the board of Americans for the Arts Action Fund since 2006.*



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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