

Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

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Big Changes Underway in the U.S. Senate

Characterized by some strategists as a “wave,” the 2014 election brought Republican leadership to the U.S. Senate for the first time in eight years. No Republicans up for election lost their race. The party also picked up a net gain of nine seats. Overall, the 114th Congress welcomed 13 new senators. Republicans now have more seats on every Senate committee, including holding the chairman positions. As Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) retires after 30 years of service, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) becomes the new chair of the committee with jurisdiction over education policy with Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) as ranking member. On the funding side, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) now chairs the Interior Appropriations subcommittee that makes funding decisions affecting the National Endowment for the Arts with pro-arts Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) as ranking member. Current Cultural

Caucus Co-Chairmen, Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY), continue their joint leadership of the Caucus, with work to increase membership after three members’ election defeats and another three retirements. The Senate has also adjusted work schedules—the new session calendar for 2015 shows longer work weeks and more time in Washington. This could be an indication of the possibility for increased policy action this year, which may be beneficial to the arts as the 114th Congress begins with almost every major education and training bill up for reauthorization.



Encourage Creativity: Teach the Arts Tool Kits



A student arts advocate is inspired by dance. To learn more about her and her journey, watch the videos at AmericansForTheArts.org/EncourageCreativity

Arts education is largely a local issue—nearly 90 percent of funding comes from city and state governments and policies. We work hard to advance support for arts education at all levels of government; but the real work happens on the ground, in your communities, by people like you.

To support local leaders in their advocacy efforts for arts education, we have produced a new suite of tools to help you build, craft, and present effective messages to educational leaders in order to affect change in local communities.

The **ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY** tool kit is designed to complement the Arts Education Navigator e-book series, and includes advocate tools to learn strategies for making change, compelling videos to use in advocacy presentations, and quizzes to learn the robust facts & figures to present.

Go ahead now. Speak up in support of arts education to your local or state school board, principal or state superintendent., Be sure to check out www.AmericansForTheArts.org/EncourageCreativity to get the tools and resources needed to be the best advocate possible.

Message from the President

Thank you to all our grassroots Arts Action Fund advocates who went out on November 4 and voted for pro-arts candidates and ballot measures. Less than 24 hours after polls closed, we released our Post-Election Impact on the Arts update, explaining how races on the national, state, and local levels would impact the arts in 2015. After releasing this report online and to our members, Executive Director of the Arts Action Fund Nina Ozlu Tunceli and myself immediately travelled from coast to coast to explain to our stakeholders, in person, what the midterm elections meant for the arts.

For example, Nina flew down to Atlanta to brief dozens of local arts leaders on the national, state, and local impact of the elections on the arts. Then the following week, we both went to Seattle to participate in

several local meetings. I want to give a special shout out to Seattle arts leader Mari Horita for helping to personally raise \$5,000 from Seattle arts patrons to support the Arts Action Fund PAC. We wrapped up the month with our national Post-Election Impact on the Arts webinar, which you can access at www.artsactionfund.org/news/entry/election-impact.

Looking ahead to 2015, I am thrilled to announce that the 28th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture will feature Television Hall of Fame producer, writer, and political activist **Norman Lear**. Known for his socially conscious satires, Norman revolutionized how the arts impact society with shows like *All in the Family* and *The Jeffersons*.



Americans for the Arts and Arts Action Fund President and CEO Bob Lynch welcomes National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu and former U.S. Senator and now CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America Chris Dodd to the National Arts Awards Gala.

The Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts & Public Policy will take place at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC on March 23, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Arts Action Fund members can order free tickets to the lecture by visiting www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Hanks.



No sooner than the 2014 ballot boxes were packed away, the 2016 presidential election began in earnest. Don't believe us? The so-called "invisible primary" is well underway, with millions of dollars being raised by "Ready For..." Super PACS, and cable news pundits already chattering about who will run, how they'll fare, and if they can possibly beat the presumptive (though undeclared) Democratic front runner, Hillary Clinton, or early GOP front runner Jeb Bush.

Because 2016 is an open seat presidential election, the pressure will be high on both sides to choose an "electable" candidate who can win the White House. Meanwhile, Senate Republicans won't be resting on their 2014 laurels too long, as the 2016 map features several Republican senators up for re-election in states that President Obama carried twice, such as Mark Kirk (R-IL), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), and Ron Johnson (R-WI). Even the House of Representatives, where Republicans now boast their largest majority since the Hoover administration, will have to campaign for re-election during a presidential



Throwback from 1999: Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch meets with Hillary Clinton at the White House

year, when Democratic turnout is famously higher. The Arts Action Fund has wasted no time in preparing for 2016. We will be on the ground in early primary states like Iowa, New Hampshire, and Florida, ready to secure Art Platform Statements from presidential candidates from both parties. We will also release our 2016 Congressional Arts Report Card, and distribute surveys to new congressional candidates. In the summer of 2016, the Arts Action Fund will be at both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions to hold arts policy panels, ensuring that the voices of arts advocates are heard at the highest levels of American politics.

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/news-room/legislative-news.

Year-End Arts Action & New Congress Taking Seat

The 113th Congress adjourned with passage of some important arts-related bills, including final Fiscal Year 2015 funding and a brief extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover tax policy. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) will each receive level funding of \$146 million. The Office of Museum Services will remain at \$30 million and the Arts in Education program within the U.S. Department of Education will also stay at \$25 million, despite threats of being zeroed-out. Congress also passed a patch to allow last-minute, tax-free charitable contributions from IRA accounts for the month of December. As the new Congress started this January, work on reauthorizing the expired Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has taken center stage, which could greatly impact arts education. The first Senate hearing occurred on January 21. Also in the new Congress is new arts



Top Minnesota delegation of Arts Action Fund advocates visit Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN), now the new Ranking Member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, during Arts Advocacy Day in her Capitol Hill office in Washington, DC. Pictured (L to R): Jeff Prauer, Minnesota Metropolitan Regional Arts Council; Faye Price and Sheila Smith, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts; Leslie LeCuyer, Central Minnesota Arts Board; Rep. Betty McCollum; Mike Charron and Sue Gens, Minnesota State Arts Board.

leadership in the House, including pro-arts member Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) becoming Ranking Member of the Interior Appropriations subcommittee, which makes funding decisions affecting the NEA.



Join us for Arts Advocacy Day and the 28th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts & Public Policy, featuring Norman Lear.

March 23–24, 2015

Every year, Americans for the Arts gathers more than 500 arts advocates for a day of training, 1,500 people for a night of inspiration at the Nancy Hanks Lecture, followed the next day by meetings with members of Congress—to put that training into action. Register now at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD.



Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

Major Shifts in State and Local Leadership

Last year was a game-changing year: 46 states elected 6,057 (82 percent) of the country's 7,383 state legislative seats. At the end of the night, Republicans picked up an additional 315 state legislative seats and now control approximately 4,100 seats, the highest since 1920. Republicans now control 68 out of the nation's 98 legislative chambers.

While the vast majority of people, regardless of their state, said it was time to purge career politicians, voting patterns did not follow. Ninety-six percent of state incumbents standing for re-election won, which is an incredibly

high number. In Georgia, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, and South Carolina, 100 percent of incumbents were re-elected. West Virginia voters were the closest to electing an entirely new state legislature, with only a 79 percent incumbent re-election rate.

Seventy-two percent (36 out of 50) of the nation's governors were up for election with five new governors being elected in Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. The Arts Action Fund is pleased that several pro-arts governors were re-elected, including Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R), Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (D), and Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy (D).

The Arts Action Fund tracked 29 state and local ballot measures, and some saw wonderful results. In Rhode Island, Ballot Question 5 passed with more than 60 percent of the vote. It authorizes \$35 million in bonds to be spent on renovating cultural facilities, and grant funds for the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. On the local front, Utah saw six localities (including Salt Lake City) pass local sales tax increases of 0.1 percent to fund zoos, arts, parks, and other recreation facilities.



YOUR **POLICY VOTE BALLOT** IS ENCLOSED

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PAC Update



Thank You!

We'd like to extend a special thank you to all of the donors who contributed or raised \$200 or more to our Political Action Committee in the 2013-14 election cycle. The midterm election illustrated how important it is to educate all our elected leaders about the transformative impact of the arts and arts education. A special thank you to our top PAC donors of 2014—you made it all possible.

Judi Beck
Phoebe Bender
Charles Block
Dianne Brace
Roger Brooks
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Jay Seller
Steven Spiess
Michael Spring
Nancy Stephens
Ann Stack
Nina Ozlu Tunceli
Marian Warden
Dianne Vapnek



"As a life-long cultural worker, I've learned some things about effective advocacy. Arts support should transcend partisanship—When public funding is tied to partisan politics, the arts lose. Like it or not, it's a pay-to-play world; money matters in politics. The Arts Action Fund invests in pro-arts candidates regardless of party affiliation, candidates who advance the "arts matter" mission. It feels good to put my money where my mouth and heart are. Advocacy is year-round and so are my contributions. Monthly payments are painless and easy." —Arts Action Fund Member Margot Knight

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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