

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

We write to ask that you consider the needs of the arts and culture sector and its workers in recovery package for individuals and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis released data showing that arts and cultural economic activity accounted for 4.5 percent of gross domestic product, or \$877.8 billion, in 2017, and directly supported 5.1 million jobs across the country. As the country takes necessary measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, that economic activity – and the millions of jobs associated with it – is deeply endangered.

From suspended and canceled productions to reduced consumer spending on arts and cultural products, the sector has felt the impact quickly and profoundly. Following a national survey of its members, Americans for the Arts reported financial losses of an estimated \$3.2 billion to date. Importantly, the survey also showed that this is hurting communities nationwide – large cities, rural towns, and everywhere in between.

First, we ask that you consider appropriating \$4 billion in emergency supplemental funding for economic development, business continuity, and direct assistance that is accessible to the arts community. Cultural agencies like the National Endowment for the Arts are well-positioned to administer such relief given their longstanding knowledge of and relationships within the sector. The NEA successfully distributed \$50 million in direct grantmaking as appropriated within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and can provide the breadth and magnitude of support necessary to assist arts and culture organizations and artists through the current crisis.

Second, though we were pleased to support efforts in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to expand paid sick days, family leave, and unemployment insurance, we are concerned that arts and entertainment workers can't access this relief due to the sector's unique and variable employment structures. An entertainment worker may be employed by many different productions every year, without consistent employment contracts, schedules, or compensation. Similarly, a self-employed or independent contracting artist may rely on working hundreds of gigs or events to earn a living. These challenges make it difficult to access existing programs, especially with an accurate assessment of lost income. We urge you to consider targeted relief to support the livelihoods of arts and entertainment workers.

Third, we are concerned about the potential impact of decreased charitable giving on the arts and cultural sector. Nonprofit arts organizations depend on charitable giving for 40 percent of their revenue and will count on it even more now that earned revenue is not available. Please consider enhanced deductions for charitable support of the entire nonprofit sector.

Arts and culture touch our lives in countless ways every day, whether in ensuring a well-rounded education for our children, promoting civic dialogue, or supporting Main Streets in communities across the country. As this pandemic response continues, we will need your support to stem losses and ensure the sector's survival.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Co-Chair, Arts Caucus
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Co-Chair, STEAM Caucus
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Ayanna Pressley
Cedric L. Richmond
Adam Smith
James P. McGovern
John B. Larson
Susan Wild
Doris Matsui
Nydia M. Velázquez
Lisa Blunt Rochester
Haley M. Stevens
Anna G. Eshoo
Jerrold Nadler
Ben Ray Luján
Rashida Tlaib
Gwen S. Moore
Jan Schakowsky

David N. Cicilline
Mike Doyle
Salud O. Carbajal
Joe Cunningham
Albio Sires
G. K. Butterfield
Darren Soto
Mike Levin
Ann McLane Kuster
Marc Veasey
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Debbie Dingell
Mark Pocan
Harley Rouda
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Dina Titus
Marcia L. Fudge

Carolyn B. Maloney
Deb Haaland
Steve Cohen
John Lewis
Julia Brownley
Pramila Jayapal
Tony Cárdenas
Joe Courtney
Barbara Lee
Peter Welch
Bill Foster
Madeleine Dean
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Raúl M. Grijalva
Tim Ryan
Peter A. DeFazio