Appropriations Committee

February 26, 2025

Subcommittee on Conservation and Development

**Public Hearing on H.B. 6864**

An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2027

Good evening, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Somers, Representative Nuccio and members of the Appropriations Committee.

**[Make it personal!]**Introduce yourself, your organization and the programs & services you provide that are funded by DECD. How many people do you serve? (staff, community/audience) If you have other impact data add it in here.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 6864, the Governor’s Budget. I am here to request that you **increase funding for vital arts and culture organizations and programs.** I urge the Committee to **oppose the portion of the Governor’s budget which proposes reductions to the creative economy of Connecticut.** The budget proposes the full elimination of the “various grants” line item affecting 8 organizations, and reduces funding for 29 Tourism Fund earmarks for a total of $2 million in each year.

These cuts would have a devastating effect on the arts and cultural programs such as ours, which rely on this funding as we continue our efforts to recover from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

**[Make it personal!]**

What are the challenges your organization is facing that are caused by lack of funding? Have you closed programs? Reduced staffing/performances/classes? What are the risks or consequences if the funding is not increased? Focus on the impact to the community you serve if possible.

The creative sector drives nearly $12 billion to Connecticut’s economy, employs 54,000 people, and represents 4% of our GDP. State investments in the arts are an investment in the Connecticut economy, our cities and towns, and the quality of life for all our residents. This investment also has a net positive effect for our communities, every dollar invested by the state returns at least $7 in economic activity.

Studies have shown that each dollar invested by the state returns at least $7 in economic activity for Connecticut. According to a study conducted in Connecticut by Americans for the Arts, each year, the non-profit creative economy produces $348 million in revenue for local businesses, supports over 16,000 jobs, generates over $600 million a year in industry expenditures and brings in more than 10 million people to our downtowns: 9.7 million Connecticut residents and 1 million tourists from other states. Despite this clear impact Connecticut is far behind investment in this sector compared to our neighboring states averaging only $1.88 per capita including earmarks, and only $0.41 without.

**[Make it personal!]**

What would you do if you got an increase in funding? How would you be able to make Connecticut a more vibrant place to live and work?

Please support increasing funding for community nonprofits and oppose any reductions in funding to the creative economy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.