Commerce Committee

March 11, 2025

**Public Hearing on S.B. 1456**

AN ACT DEDICATING A PORTION OF THE MEALS TAX REVENUE TO ARTS, CULTURE, AND TOURISM

Good morning, Senator Hartley, Representative Meskers, Senator Rahman, Representative Keith and esteemed members of the Commerce Committee,

**[Make it personal!]**Introduce yourself, your organization and the programs & services you provide to your community. How does your creativity impact your community? What towns do you serve or where do you live? How many people do you serve? If you have other impact data add it in here.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B 1456. 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.

According to the latest Arts and Economic Prosperity 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!]**

If you received funding from the Cultural Fund during COVID, or you receive funding from the Connecticut Office of the Arts this is your chance to tell your story about how it impacted your organization and your community.

I am testifying in support of allocating 1% of the meals tax to arts, culture and tourism funding, as well as municipal funding and workforce development. This increased level of funding will allow the Office of the Arts and Connecticut Humanities to increase their support to the artists and organizations that keep our downtowns vibrant and interesting places to live, work and visit. I am supportive of the proposal from CT Arts Alliance, CT Humanities, CT Tourism Coalition and the CT Retail Association to break down the 1% of Meals Tax collected to support the following:

* 50% to the municipalities where the tax occurred
* 30% to Arts, Culture, and Tourism Funding with the breakdown being at least:
  + $5 million for Arts funding
  + $5 million for Cultural funding
  + $12 million for Tourism Marketing
* 20% to Workforce Development

This increased support is an important step toward making Connecticut a leader in New England and across the country in the creative and tourism sectors. Please support increasing funding for these organizations doing important work to bring our communities together through arts and culture, increase creative and innovative economic activity in our downtowns, and increase community health and vibrancy.

**[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?

Sincerely,

Your Name/Title/Organization