



June 6, 2022



The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Chairwoman  
U.S. House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
2007 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
2007 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce,

On behalf of the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE), I write in support of funding the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) at \$204 million each in fiscal year (FY) 2023.

Many members of DPE's affiliate unions in the arts, entertainment, and media industries earn their living working on NEA and NEH-supported productions, programs, and performances. Still more union creative professionals who work now in the commercial parts of these industries benefited from the nonprofit arts and media sector's role as a proving ground for establishing their lifelong careers.

Funding the NEA and NEH at \$204 million each will ensure that the agencies can continue to support good-paying, family-supporting jobs in every state and congressional district for creative professionals, including the members of DPE's unions. Through grants, seed money, and technical support, the two agencies help put these people to work on artistic and educational content that is available to Americans of all means, geographies, and abilities. NEA and NEH-funded programs help veterans heal from the invisible scars of war, inspire the next generation of creators and innovators, and deliver content that unites people across small towns and big cities. Increasing the NEA and NEH annual funding level to \$204 million in FY 2023 is also an important step toward a historical full funding level of \$331 million, or \$1 per capita.

Additional NEA and NEH funding will help creative professionals quickly return to work safely following the COVID-19 pandemic's economic devastation. Creative professionals were among the first to lose their jobs at the pandemic's outset, and they have been among the last to return to their jobs.

Increased funding for the NEA and NEH is also good for local communities and the small businesses that are still recovering from the pandemic. Pre-pandemic research shows that audiences spend an estimated \$31.47 per person, per event,



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beyond the cost of admission, on lodging, restaurants, clothing, transportation, and other goods and services.

In addition, DPE believes the NEA and NEH are critical to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts, entertainment, and media industries. In February 2021, DPE and our affiliate unions in these industries released a “Policy Agenda for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries,” which contains policy solutions aimed at creating diverse talent pipelines and incentivizing diversity in hiring. Equity and inclusion are essential, not only as a matter of doing what is right, but also for the long-term sustainability of the creative sector.

In sum, the NEA and NEH are critical agencies for working people and local economies. Their work delivers a high return on investment and cannot be replaced by the private sector. I urge the Subcommittee to fund the NEA and NEH at \$204 million and help sustain America’s continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions, please contact DPE Assistant to the President/Legislative Director, Michael Wasser, at [mwasser@dpeaflcio.org](mailto:mwasser@dpeaflcio.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JDorning', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jennifer Dorning, President