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ARTSSOUTHDAKOTA.ORG



February 2, 2018

Rep. Steven Haugaard
47629 258th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Dear. Rep. Haugaard,

I am writing today to respectfully ask that you vote NO on HB 1206. As a life-long South Dakotan, a professional musician, and citizen who believes it is important for South Dakota to have a strong arts and cultural community, your leadership is of vital importance. Passage of HB 1206 would eliminate all funding for the South Dakota Arts Council, a fifty-one year old foundational council supporting access to the arts for all in our great state.

In FY17, the South Dakota Arts Council awarded \$1.36 million in grant support to arts organizations, schools, artists, and other nonprofit organizations to support arts projects and programs throughout the state. This investment resulted in \$21.22 million in local spending on supported projects and programs, which translates to a \$15.61 to \$1 overall return on investment for the South Dakota Arts Council, but a \$24.57 to \$1 ROI for our portion of state funds generated by the half-penny tax. That is a sound public investment, generating both state and local tax revenue and supporting community growth and wellness. The Council's FY17 co-sponsored activities reached an audience of 1,785,189 people, including 330,000 youth and involving more than 8,000 artists. The Council's grants budget made up 83 percent of the agency's overall budget and grants reached 88 percent of South Dakota counties.

The arts are vital to South Dakota. South Dakotans report participation in the arts at higher levels than the rest of the nation. In a 12-month period, 71.4 percent of South Dakotans attended at least one arts event and 51.4 percent of South Dakotans actually performed or created artworks. The South Dakota Arts Council is a foundational and leading part of our arts ecosystem. I would appreciate your consideration to defeat this bill. This funding is producing results and we should not interfere with its success for all South Dakotans.

Thank you for your service to our state and please know I am available at any time should you want to speak in person about this issue.

Best Regards,

Jim Speirs
Executive Director

