

March 27, 2017

Sen. John Thune
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet briefly during the South Dakota Sunrise Coffee. It was a pleasure to visit with you. Also, thank you to your team and specifically Adam Wek for the opportunity to share information about the creative community in South Dakota. Adam was kind to spend so much time with us. He's a bright and engaging young man.

The arts are an important economic driver, community builder, workforce recruitment and retention tool, and most importantly the very fabric that weaves our many cultures together in South Dakota. Funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which is directly administered by our state agency, the South Dakota Arts Council, is a very effective investment in our state's economy. For every \$1.00 from the NEA & SD Arts Council, the return is \$14.00 in local investment. The national average is \$1.00 equals \$9.00, so not surprising that South Dakotans are able to make the initial \$1.00 investment go much further. Also, it is important to note that the creative industry in South Dakota employs over 6,300 people!

We ask for your support in the coming months as you work to draft our nation's 2018 budget. The NEA has been a key leader in the development of South Dakota's creative infrastructure over the last 50 years. It is fair to say that NEA funding supports rural communities at a level that would be difficult to replace. The average US tax payer contributes only \$.46 annually to the endowment, but South Dakotans receive well over \$1.00 per capita in return. In short, the NEA through its highly effective model partnership with state arts agencies truly works!

Thank you for your service to our nation and most importantly, the great state of South Dakota. If I can be of assistance to you or your staff on arts related issues, please know I am happy to help.

Best Regards,

Jim Speirs | Executive Director