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ARTSSOUTHDAKOTA.ORG



March 23, 2023

Rep. Dusty Johnson
1714 Longworth HOB Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0004

Dear Rep. Johnson,

I write today to support of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Their work, alongside the South Dakota Arts Council, has been vital in developing and supporting our state's arts ecosystem. Therefore, Arts South Dakota urges you to support the proposed FY2024 Interior appropriations bill that includes \$211 million for the NEA & NEH. Established in 1965, including support from our very own Congressman Ben Riffe, the NEA and NEH continue to be instrumental in assuring all South Dakotans have access to the arts and experience creativity in their communities.

In FY21, the South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC), largely through support from the NEA, awarded \$1.3 million in grants to support arts organizations, schools, artists, and other nonprofits throughout the state. In fact, 70 percent of the SDAC's overall budget is granted to artists and organizations, resulting in 299 grants in 46 South Dakota communities. You can see more about the direct impact of these grants by visiting <https://artssouthdakota.org/map>. Or visit https://artscouncil.sd.gov/about/FY21_SDAC_Impact_Report_web.pdf to see additional benefits of the NEA's support in our state. Without the NEA, NEH & SDAC, many communities would be without the essential support, and in many instances, the only support needed to bolster local arts initiatives or projects.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis calculated the arts and culture sector's contributions to the gross domestic product (GDP). In 2020, arts and culture added \$876.7 billion, or 4.2 percent, to the national GDP. However, between 2019 and 2020, the U.S. arts economy shrank at nearly twice the rate of the economy as a whole: arts and cultural production fell by 6.4 percent when adjusted for inflation, compared with a 3.4 percent decline in the overall economy. That is why ongoing investment in NEA and NEH must remain a priority.

Consider South Dakota without the Matthews Opera House in Spearfish, the Black Hills Playhouse in Custer, or the National Music Museum in Vermillion. Imagine South Dakota without traditional and Native artists creating art that is the essence of South Dakota. The arts bind us together, tell our collective story, and give our communities the creative edge to build a better future. The arts positively impact all South Dakotans! The NEA & NEH are the frontline support for the creative sector, especially in rural states like South Dakota. Please support the proposed FY24 budget bill.

Thank you for your service to our state, and please never hesitate to reach out if Arts South Dakota or I can support your work.

Best Regards,

Jim

cc. Email to Sydney Powers

