



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Americans for the Arts Responds to Senate Passage of Economic Recovery Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch gave the following statement on the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by the Senate (61 to 37) today:

“The United States Senate missed an opportunity today to provide much needed stimulus support to the nation’s creative workforce. By not including \$50 million in recovery funds to assist nonprofit arts organizations from closing or laying-off more workers, the Senate has failed to respond to the very real economic crisis facing the nonprofit arts industry.

“The biggest surprise occurred when the Senate passed an egregious amendment offered by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) by a vote of 73 to 24 to specifically prevent any economic stimulus funds from being given to museums, theaters, and arts centers. As the bill heads to conference, Congressional leaders and the White House need to recognize that the arts are a legitimate U.S. economic industry and must keep the arts recovery funds in the final version of the legislation. These funds will allow arts organizations—large and small—to play a vital role in reviving their local economy.

The arts are a prime vehicle for job creation and a valued economic distribution mechanism. The country’s more than 4,000 local and state arts agencies have nearly 50 years of proven history as good stewards of our tax dollars and can ensure speedy disbursement to local projects, along with the excellent direct distribution track record of the National Endowment for the Arts itself. The arts are essential to the health and vitality of our communities.”

NEA funds, on average, leverage \$7 in additional support through local, state, and private donations, for every one dollar in federal support. Fifty million in economic stimulus will leverage \$350 million of investment in the nonprofit arts, which will help prevent 14,422 jobs from being lost.

In January, The National Governors Association issued a report stating that “arts and culture are important to state economies. Arts and culture-related industries ... provide direct economic benefits to states and communities: They create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases.”

Last week, the House of Representatives passed its version of the bill 244 to 188. In addition to NEA recovery funds, the bill provides additional opportunities throughout the federal government that could also help the nonprofit arts sector and individual artists. Many of these other opportunities correspond closely with Americans for the Arts’ Recommendations for Economic Recovery & the Arts to help nonprofit and governmental arts groups as well as individual artists during this economic downturn.

***Americans for the Arts** is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.*

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