

Town of Franklin



Stacey David, Chair

Franklin Cultural Council

355 East Central Street

Franklin, Massachusetts 02038-1352

E-mail: franklinculturalcouncil02038@gmail.com

January 26, 2017

Senator Elizabeth Warren
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren,

We, the members of the Franklin Cultural Council, are extremely concerned about President Trump's vow to defund the National Endowment for the Arts. NEA funding flows through the Massachusetts Cultural Council to us, a local Cultural Council. We award grants to local programs in the arts, humanities and sciences, such as field trips for school children, performances at the schools and senior center, art demonstrations and exhibits by local artists, local fairs and festivals, and concerts on the Town Common. We awarded 23 grants in 2017 for projects estimated to serve 26,770 members of our community. For 26% of our projects, the FCC is the sole funding source. These are not high-profile programs or large museum exhibits, but small, local events that bring us together as a community and help define our humanity.

President Trump attests that eliminating NEA and other arts funding from the federal budget will make a significant impact on our national debt. The National Endowment for the Arts, however, represents only 0.025% of the federal budget—clearly not enough to have any true effect on our debt, yet enough to have substantial impact on the culture of our country. The federal-state partnership between the NEA and the state and local Cultural Councils supports more than 23,000 grants in 5,000 communities across the United States. Combined, NEA and state arts agency grant awards reach all 435 federal congressional districts. NEA funding made possible more than 30,000 concerts, readings and performances and 5,000 exhibitions in 2015, attended by more than 33 million individuals.

So are the arts a worthwhile investment? We believe they are. According to the National Assembly of State Art Agencies, "The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production contributes more than \$704.2 billion to the nation's economy. This equates to 4.23% of GDP, which is greater than construction (\$619.8 billion) or transportation and warehousing (\$483.5 billion). Arts and culture support 4.7 million wage and salary workers and many more independent jobs. Research confirms that the arts cultivate young imaginations and facilitate success in school, enhancing students' academic achievement in multiple subject areas. The arts provide the critical thinking, communications and innovation skills essential to a productive 21st-century work force."

We ask that you actively oppose President Trump's initiative to defund the arts. They are important.

Sincerely,

Stacey David
Chair

Susan Plume
Treasurer

Karen Wellerson Juhl
Secretary

Teresa Burr

Barbara Gardner

Rob Cautillo