The Quarterly Newsletter of the Americans for the Arts Action Fund
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YOUR 2018 ARTS POLICY VOTE (SEE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE)
Congress Passes Tax Reform That Could Negatively Impact Charities

In a series of fast-moving, last-minute negotiations by a handful of Republican legislators, Congress passed an extensive tax reform bill on December 19, 2017, along party-line votes. The final bill received no Democratic support.

This sweeping legislation now brings substantial changes that could impact the health of the nonprofit sector. Although some harmful provisions were successfully defeated (like proposals to tax college tuition waivers received by graduate students), the biggest concern is the indirect impact on future charitable giving that will take place. As a result of Congress doubling the standard deduction, millions of middle class households will no longer itemize their expenses on a Schedule A to their tax return. This is important because the only place you can claim tax deductions for gifts made to charity is on this itemized form. The charitable community will work together in the coming months and years to collect data on the measurable impact on giving as we urge Congress to adopt a “Universal Charitable Giving Deduction” so that 100 percent of all taxpayers can be rewarded for giving generously to charities throughout the country.

Fortunately, the next two years will be ripe with additional opportunities for adjustments to the new tax law. The Arts Action Fund will continue this priority work in support of nonprofit arts organizations.

2018 is also an election year! 468 seats in Congress (33 Senate seats and all 435 House seats) are up for election this year. See the Federal Update on Page 3 for a list of open seats for the 2018 race, with membership in Arts and Cultural Caucuses noted. Be on the lookout for the 2018 Congressional Arts Report Card in coming months as we approach Election Day!

Second Lady Karen Pence Announces Art Therapy Initiative

The Second Lady of the United States Karen Pence announced that her single, focused initiative will be to promote the importance of art therapy. Her Healing with the HeART initiative will work to elevate the art therapy field to show its effectiveness in working with children, returning soldiers, and citizens in general. She describes art therapy as a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages. It is three-pronged, involving the art, the therapist, and the client.

At the recent Mayors Arts Breakfast convening of 600 mayors and arts leaders of The United States Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts, Mrs. Pence was the keynote speaker. She stated that her Healing with the HeART initiative has three goals. “One is to elevate the profession and explain it. This is not arts and crafts. The second is to encourage young people to go into this profession, and the third is to make people aware that this is an option. If you want some type of therapy, if you’ve had a trauma, this is something you can look into.” Mrs. Pence, a former elementary arts educator and accomplished watercolorist has a long working relationship with the Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health in Indianapolis, and serves as a board member for Tracy’s Kids, an art therapy program for young cancer patients. Art therapy is something that Mrs. Pence has been involved with and committed to for years and we are very pleased that she has decided to use her position to advance this issue. Americans for the Arts looks forward to working with Mrs. Pence and partners like the National Art Therapy Association in promoting her program to arts supporters nationally.
On November 3, 2017, Americans for the Arts hosted a national summit of state arts education leaders in Denver, CO to share findings of Americans for the Arts’ three-year state arts education policy pilot program in 10 states. Leaders from around the nation discussed shifts towards greater state control in education policy, integration of arts education funding in Title I proposals, adoption of arts education standards in states, and successful state advocacy campaigns to increase funding for arts education.

The pilot program’s three-pronged strategy helped to successfully influence implementation of federal mandates and programs at the state-level; expand state support of arts education in policy and appropriations; and impact local access to arts programs and instruction for students. Learn more about the reports, case studies, and briefing videos by visiting www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3.

It was a pleasure presenting our 2018 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards with The United States Conference of Mayors to Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, and Citizen-Artist Michael Cerveris.

I am also thrilled to announce that the Americans for the Arts 31st Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy will feature a conversation with Lonnie G. Bunch III, Founding Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Richard D. Parsons, Senior Advisor of Providence Equity Partners, Inc., Board Member of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Chairman of The Rockefeller Foundation Board of Trustees. The lecture will be moderated by the Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden and will take place at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC on March 12, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. Arts Action Fund members can order free tickets to the lecture by visiting www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Hanks.

The following day after the Hanks Lecture, hundreds of Arts Action Fund members will descend on Capitol Hill for National Arts Advocacy Day. Arts advocates from 46 states will meet with their Members of Congress to urge them to reject the Administration’s FY 2019 budget proposal to terminate funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute for Museum and Library Services, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Even if you cannot make it to Washington, you can still play an important role. Arts Action Fund members are asked to cast their annual policy vote on the arts to direct our lobbying activities and resources for the year. Please visit www.ArtsActionFund.org/PolicyVote2018.

On February 12, 2018, the President submitted his FY 2019 federal budget request to Congress, recommending once again to terminate those federal agencies in charge of funding the arts, humanities, museums, libraries, and public broadcasting. The following day, Americans for the Arts ran the following full-page ad in Capitol Hill newspapers declaring that public investment in the arts helps drive the nation’s economy.

Americans for the Arts Reveals Findings of State Policy Pilot Program for Arts Education

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PAC Update

The Arts Action Fund has completed its annual year-end campaign for 2017. Utilizing both direct mail and e-mail for the appeals, the funds raised during the campaign directly support advocacy and political efforts through both the Arts Action Fund and the Arts Action Fund PAC. We set a goal to raise $30,000, and we exceeded that goal by raising over $36,000 from Arts Action Fund members like you. The campaign has officially concluded, but we will happily receive contributions well into the New Year from our members. We extend our most sincere thanks to everyone who supported the 2017 year-end campaign, and look forward to 2018.

Federal Update

Below is a list of open seats for the 2018 race. There are many open seats in this mid-term election due to members of Congress resigning, retiring or seeking another office.

House

Resigned
Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)*
John Conyers (D-MI)*
Trent Franks (R-AZ)
Mick Mulvaney (R-SC)
Tim Murphy (R-PA)*
Mike Pompeo (R-KS)
Tom Price (R-GA)
Ryan Zinke (R-MT)
Pat Tiberi (R-OH)

Retiring
Joe L. Barton (R-TX)
Robert Brady (D-PA)
Jim Bridenstine (R-OK)
Charlie Dent (R-PA)*
John J. Duncan (R-TN)
Blake Farenthold (R-TX)
Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ)
Robert W. Goodlatte (R-VA)
Trey Gowdy (R-SC)
Gene Green (D-TX)*
Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL)*
Gregg Harper (R-MS)
Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)
Darrell Issa (R-CA)
Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)*
Sam Johnson (R-TX)
Ruben Kihuen (D-NV)
Sander M. Levin (D-MI)*
Frank A. LoBiondo (R-NJ)*
Patrick Meehan (R-PA)
Rick Nolan (D-MN)
Ted Poe (R-TX)
Dave Reichert (R-WA)*
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)*
Ed Royce (R-CA)
Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH)
Bill Shuster (R-PA)*
Lamar Smith (R-TX)*
Dave Trott (R-MI)
Niki Tsongas (D-MA)*

Running for other office
Lou Barletta (R-PA)
Diane Black (R-TN)
Marsh Blackburn (R-TN)
Kevin Cramer (R-ND)
John Delaney (D-MD)*
Bob DeSantis (R-FL)
Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI)
Evan Jenkins (R-WV)*
Raul R. Labrador (R-ID)
Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)
Martha McSally (R-AZ)
Luke Messer (R-IN)
Kristi Noem (R-SD)
Beto O’Rourke (D-TX)*
Steve Pearce (R-NM)
Jared Polis (D-CO)*
James B. Renacci (R-OH)
Todd Rokita (R-IN)
Jacky Rosen (D-NV)
Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)*
Tim Walz (D-MN)*

Senate

Resigned
Al Franken (D-MN)*
Jeff Sessions (R-AL)

Retiring
Bob Corker (R-TN)
Jeff Flake (R-AZ)
Orrin Hatch (R-UT)

*Member of House or Senate Arts Caucus

Latest Updates: AmericansForTheArts.org/Legislative-News

State and Local Update

Reno, NV Mayor Hillary Schieve and Americans for the Arts Senior Director of State and Local Government Affairs Jay Dick show off their Arts Education Week wrist bands.

America’s mayors understand the value of the arts and culture better than most any level of elected officials given that their work is by nature local and they can easily see the importance of the arts each and every day. It stands to reason that The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), Americans for the Arts’ oldest and closest partner, strongly supports the arts and culture through their work and priorities. We are pleased to welcome Reno, Nevada Mayor Hillary Schieve as the new chair of the USCM’s Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports (TAPES) Committee. It is through the TAPES Committee that mayors receive arts-related data, studies and best practices that they can take back and implement in their cities. We look forward to working with Mayor Schieve and know that she will do a wonderful job in promoting the arts and culture to her colleagues.

The Arts Action Fund also wishes to note the untimely passing of arts Mayor Ed Lee of San Francisco. The arts community will be forever grateful for his work in promoting the arts and culture.