

**Written Testimony in Support of FY11 Appropriations for the  
National Endowment for the Arts**

Submitted by the Honorable Michael A. Nutter

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**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies**

**Arts Build Communities**

April 13, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, thank you for providing me this opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Michael Nutter and I am Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am delighted to be here on Arts Advocacy Day representing the United States Conference of Mayors and cities across the country. I am here to ask the Subcommittee to approve a budget of \$180 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the creation, preservation, and presentation of the arts in America.

Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods and I can assure you that in each of our communities, you can feel the presence of the arts. The arts anchor our neighborhoods. They are an integral part of our civic identity, a vital part of the fabric of Philadelphia community life, a key ingredient in the education and enrichment of our children, as well as a major segment of our economy.

As Mayor, it is my job to ensure that Philadelphia becomes a safer, smarter and healthier city, one in which all residents have real opportunities for education, housing, employment and a good quality of life. My goals for Philadelphia include:

**1. Economic Recovery and Jobs**

*Philadelphia grows as a green city*

**2. Enhancing Public Safety**

*Philadelphia becomes the safest large city in the country*

**3. Investing in Youth and Protecting the Most Vulnerable**

*Philadelphia's youth and vulnerable populations have the opportunity to thrive*

**4. Reforming Government**

*Reforming city government to work better and cost less*

Within each of these four goals, there has been a role for the arts. Today I want to demonstrate the importance of the arts by discussing recent initiatives in Philadelphia, ways we are transforming communities through the arts, the importance of the arts to our economy, and the impact of NEA funding in Philadelphia.

**The Arts in Philadelphia**

Shortly after taking office in 2008, I showed my commitment to the arts by reestablishing the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and by creating the position of Chief Cultural Officer. The Chief Cultural Officer is a member of my cabinet, giving the arts a prominent role in my administration. The Office gives the public a single point of contact for the arts and

creative industries, and an enthusiastic partner in creative problem solving. As a city, we seek to employ the arts to strengthen City services and improve the lives of Philadelphians.

In my first term as Mayor, I increased the allocation to the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the City's arts grantmaking body, from \$2.2 million to \$3.2 million. Despite significant fiscal challenges, I have kept my promise to maintain the Fund at this level. Even in tough times, cultural organizations can be a catalyst to population growth, workforce development and a strong economy. Furthermore, I established the Mayor's Cultural Advisory Council, an esteemed group of cultural, creative business and philanthropic leaders who are an incredible resource to me and to this newly created office. The Council's role is to make sure we are truly addressing the needs of the arts community and the public.

In addition to supporting and nurturing the arts community in Philadelphia, I am also finding creative ways the arts can help us achieve our larger visionary goals. I applaud NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman for his commitment to working across agencies at the federal level. Philadelphia leaders also see the value in this and we have been looking to the arts as a tool to strengthen programs and services across departments: particularly in the areas of health, housing, prisons, planning and economic development, transportation, and education. Just last Friday our Streets Department organized an event to promote "Unlitter Us" – a movement to clean up Philadelphia, and it featured the talents of spoken word poets and musicians.

### **Transforming Communities in Philadelphia**

Through its nationally known Mural Arts Program, the City continues to address a number of social issues such as public safety, education and youth development. Mural Arts works with the court system, prisoner re-entry programs and other groups to build healthy and sustainable communities using community based public art projects. Each year the Mural Arts Program works with over 100 communities and employs more than 300 artists, revitalizing open spaces, and re-mediating blight with colorful and innovative public art projects. To date, this program is responsible for approximately 2,800 murals in the City of Philadelphia. The Mural Arts Program is a recipient of NEA funding.

Arts Education is critical to the success of our education goals. This year, the City's Philadelphia Cultural Fund launched a new program, The Youth Arts Enrichment Program, to foster youth engagement in the arts. The program will distribute \$350,000 in grants to exemplary arts education programs. Additionally, through a newly created organization, Arts Rising, there is a commitment to improving and expanding equitable access to arts education for all children in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Several weeks ago, I announced the recipients of the Creative Industry Workforce Grants, a new and groundbreaking program funded through the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This program is a partnership between Philadelphia's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and the Philadelphia Department of Commerce. Eight creative businesses received a total of \$500,000 in grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 for the construction or renovation of affordable artist workspaces, performance spaces and creative multi-tenant spaces. These grants for capital improvements will stimulate temporary construction jobs. Businesses were selected based on their ability to serve low and moderate-income neighborhoods and to create permanent jobs. This exciting new program is already serving as a national model for the use of CDBG funds for the arts and creative sectors.

## **Arts and Economic Impact**

Arts organizations employ our residents, and attract and retain residents, job seekers and businesses. On a regional basis, about 1,300 non-profit arts organizations put on more than 50,000 events annually. The regional non-profit cultural sector generates \$1.3 billion in annual expenditures, 40,000 jobs and \$158.5 million in State and local taxes (Source: Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, 2008 Portfolio Report).

Philadelphians love the arts, so it is not surprising that 83% of Philadelphia area residents attended an arts or cultural event in the last year. Attendees spend an average of \$37.32 per person in addition to the ticket price. Visits to arts organizations total 15 million per year (Portfolio Report). Arts and cultural organizations also attract regional and international visitors. Tourists who patronize local arts and culture spend an average of \$166 more than other tourists, a 36% increase in dollars spent (Source: Travel Industry Association)

## **Philadelphia Organizations Supported by the NEA**

The NEA supports Philadelphia arts organizations through its four programs: *Access to Artistic Excellence*, *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, *Federal/State Partnerships*, and *Learning in the Arts*. Philadelphia organizations can also receive NEA funding through our state arts agency, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; our regional arts agency, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation; and through the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, the designated Local Arts Agency authorized to re-grant federal funds. This year, Philadelphia organizations also received funding through a \$50 million allocation to the NEA from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Many of Philadelphia's acclaimed museums, historic sites, theaters, dance companies, music organizations, universities and arts education organizations are the recipients of NEA funding. This funding supports the creation of new visual and performance artworks, it fosters collaborations between organizations, supports education programming, funds research and marketing efforts, the creation of public art, and free and low cost access to museums and theaters. In the case of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, NEA funding saved jobs.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the largest museums in the country with a remarkable collection, exhilarating exhibition program and exemplary arts education program. The Museum's free and low cost programs are accessible to all Philadelphians and are made possible with NEA funding. The internationally acclaimed Philadelphia Orchestra produces Arts in the Park, a series of performances in Fairmount Park's Mann Center for Performing Arts, as well as free neighborhood concerts in Philadelphia. Both organizations are funded by the NEA.

The Kimmel Center and its many diverse resident companies, located in the heart of our downtown arts district, are also funded by the NEA. Resident company Philadelphia Dance Company (Philadanco) hosted the 22nd Annual International Conference of Blacks in Dance, in partnership with the University of the Arts in Philadelphia with a grant from the NEA. The conference brought together dance professionals from across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean to network, strategize, and share their artistic experiences. Philadelphia just closed its first international print and contemporary art festival, *Philagraphika 2010*, one of the largest events of its kind in the United States, with 300 artists and 80 venues participating. This four month-long festival, which will now be a triennial event, was also supported by the NEA.

Funding from the NEA's Recovery allocation was distributed in a number of ways: directly through the NEA, through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation and locally in Philadelphia. This funding helped to strengthen many Philadelphia organizations and artists, enabling them to continue their work while providing direct and ancillary economic benefits to our region.

There has been some criticism about the use of Recovery funding for arts organizations. As a Mayor who feels strongly that the arts are not only a key element of our economy, but also a catalyst for other important areas of economic growth, I want to reiterate my support for organizations and initiatives funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Philadelphia organizations such as Pig Iron Theater Company and Spiral Q Puppet Theater are award winning, highly regarded and successful businesses that are important members of Philadelphia's economy. These organizations received grants directly through the NEA for purpose of job retention to save jobs. Arts jobs are jobs too!

The City's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy also partnered with the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance to distribute \$225,000 to organizations as job retention grants. Ten organizations received grants and ten jobs were saved as a result. There has been overwhelming support from Philadelphia's civic leaders and residents for these investments in the arts. The Recovery funding provided by the NEA was spent efficiently and made an immediate impact in Philadelphia. There is no question in my mind that this was money well spent. I believe that annual funding from the NEA is essential to strengthening and transforming our communities.

### **Mayors' Institute on City Design**

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mayors' Institute on City Design, a program of the United States Conference of Mayors, the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Architectural Foundation. We are also excited about the NEA's grant program, the MICD25 that will provide up to \$250,000 to cities using the arts at the center of a plan to create and sustain a livable community.

Today Philadelphia is seeking to reclaim its waterfronts for the public's use. I am proud to say that we are moving ahead with the Central Delaware River Master Planning process, which we hope will be a model for open space and parks with innovative design and public art elements. Furthermore, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission is preparing the city's first comprehensive plan in 50 years for release in early 2011. *Philadelphia 2035: The Comprehensive Plan* envisions a bright, sustainable future for Philadelphia, with goals, objectives, and measurable actions related to housing, arts and culture, open space and transit-oriented development.

Philadelphia is focused on identifying the new and appropriate uses for old industrial sites throughout our City neighborhoods. A non-profit lender in our community, the Reinvestment Fund, led by Jeremy Nowak, and the University of the Pennsylvania's Social Impact for the Arts project, have been national leaders in documenting the role the arts can play in reclaiming and stabilizing neighborhoods. On his recent visit to Philadelphia, NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman visited the Crane Arts Building, a 120,000 multi-tenant arts facility in a former plumbing supplies building, and called Philadelphia "a leader" in reshaping our post-industrial communities into arts communities. Honored by this statement, we are also challenged – now we must continue our forward progress in this area. We look to our federal partner, the NEA as not

just a funder, but also as a policy maker in recognizing how these and other initiatives can impact the health and vitality of cities nationwide. Through my work with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, I know that other Mayors who lead cities of all shapes and sizes share my support for the NEA.

### **Conclusion**

The NEA is at work in Philadelphia and in many other communities across our nation. Its programs have tremendous impact in our citizens' lives and on our local economy. The NEA is critical to the continued development of American cities as centers of arts and culture and to fostering artistic excellence for generations to come.

“An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.” This Congressional declaration is a founding purpose of the NEA. I steadfastly ask you, members of the Subcommittee, to take this statement to heart and to think about the importance of the arts and the impact that NEA funding has as a tool for transformation in every one of our nation’s communities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.