

December 5, 2007

Budget Division
NY

Dear Budget Division:

As a supporter of the arts in New York State, I urge you to increase the New York State Council on the Arts' Grants Budget to \$60 million.

This increase, from the FY07-8 level of \$49 million, represents an expenditure of just 58 cents more per person in New York State. When adjusted for inflation, a \$60 million budget would not even restore the NYSCA grants budget to the FY89-90 level of \$55 million.

The arts are a proven driver of economic growth. New York is home to nearly 50,000 arts-related businesses employing nearly 300,000 people. New York State's arts businesses make a \$25.7 billion impact on the local economies and generate \$1.2 billion in tax revenue across the state.

The arts are vital to our communities. Across the state, arts organizations are at the forefront of revitalizing downtown communities, restoring neighborhoods, and driving cultural tourism.

The arts are essential for youth development. Sustained exposure to the arts from a young age help students to perform better academically, behaviorally, and increase their self-esteem.

Personally, I owe a lot to the arts exposure and experience I have enjoyed. Please make sure that these opportunities are available to future generations.

An investment in the arts is an investment in New York's future that will also bring a return today through local economic impact, tax revenue, and cultural tourism.

Sincerely,

Marisa Catalina Casey