

February 17, 2009

## Testimony On Behalf Of The International Alliance Of Theatrical Stage Employees Local #74 Southern Connecticut

Good evening committee members. My name is Edward Mangini and I am part of a delegation sent by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local #74 of Southern Connecticut. I am here to present testimony in connection with House Bill 6365.

The 267 members of Local #74 consist of theatrical carpenters, theatrical electricians, property personnel, sound personnel, wardrobe, hair, and makeup attendants. Local #74 was first chartered on May 16, 1900. Soon to be 109 years old, Local #74 is proud of the integral part it has played in the illustrious theatrical history of Connecticut. Today Local #74 enjoys relationships with all the major entertainment venues in the southern regions of our fair state.

At this time, many of those entertainment venues are feeling the effect of these current economic difficulties. Once reliable sources of supplemental income are no longer available as potential sponsors are tightening their belts in order to bridge the stream to better financial times. Ticket sales are understandably less than impressive as many Connecticut residents are feeling the economic pinch and deciding that an evening of cultural entertainment might be something they can postpone until our economy is again on the right track. These are truly natural reactions to a cloudy financial climate that has us all yearning for brighter days.

As per the proposed budget cuts, many artistic organizations are in danger of losing their state funding. With this, they will find it increasingly difficult to be able to provide the quality cultural entertainment that the people of Connecticut have grown accustomed to having at their disposal. With a loss of the artistic, entertainment programming being supplied by venues such as the Shubert in New Haven, the Palace in Waterbury and the Stamford Center for the Arts in Stamford, many a Connecticut resident will miss the opportunity for cultural enlightenment and these dark days have the potential of becoming much, much gloomier.

As I mentioned, there are 267 members of Local #74. There are roughly 2000 family dependents on those 267 members. Also affiliated with these venues are ticket takers, ushers, theater managers, production managers, office personnel and cleaners. In addition, many trades are employed to maintain the physical plants from roofers to painters and even for snow removal. Nightly, our industry is directly responsible for restaurant attendance, convenience store receipts, hotel registration and especially for the municipal parking revenue. A typical theatrical production will bring 2000 to 3000 people out of their houses, to bolster the economies of our major cities. All in a night's work for the members of Local #74.

Only a bit of simple mathematics is needed to determine the travesty that might occur

should any of these theatrical venues be unable to continue. Hurt most grievously are the very people that we all intend to help, the citizens of the state of Connecticut. The same people who pay mortgages here, pay real estates tax, pay personal property tax, and state income tax. The people that have no foreign investments, yet invest every day in the local hardware store, the corner service station and the pizza parlor down the street. Those whose children attend our local schools and someday hope to partake in our magnificent state university system. The working people of Connecticut.

With this in mind, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local #74 respectfully submits that the line items concerning funding to the Shubert, Palace, and SCA be maintained and reinstated in the subsequent year.

Thank You