

**February 24, 2011- Commerce and Development Public Hearing**

**Testimony to be presented by:**

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**Testimony:**

President John F. Kennedy said, "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is close to the center of a nation's purpose—and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization." I am here tonight to address the cuts to arts and cultural funding that Governor Malloy has proposed and to argue that even in lean economic times the arts, as President Kennedy said, are close to a nation's purpose and should be funded accordingly.

While I applaud Governor Malloy for the \$15 million dollars in funding he has proposed for statewide tourism marketing, I am concerned by his cuts to two budget lines that fund arts and cultural organizations across the state. While marketing CT is extremely important, it is also important that the arts and cultural institutions that are the center piece of this marketing are also provided with funding that will help sustain them. They too, are economic generators in their own right.

The governor's proposed budget cuts funding to two grant programs that fund the arts. The Basic Cultural Resources Grants program, which funded over 132 arts organizations in FY11 was reduced by \$297,546—from \$1,398,750 to \$1,101,204. The Cultural, Tourism, and Art Grants were reduced by \$400,543—from \$1,879,708 to \$1,479,165. While the CT Arts Alliance platform wisely calls for arts funding to be restored to \$5million, I would urge you to restore these grant programs, minimally to their current levels.

The 21% cut to these programs comes on top of deep cuts over the past three fiscal years which have already reduced the Basic Cultural Resources grant program by \$2,261,250 since FY09. The proposed cut is disproportionate to other cuts within the proposed Department of Economic and Community Development budget including line-item funding to arts and cultural organizations, which did not receive cuts other than to the CT Humanities Council. It also appears disproportionate to cuts to other grants programs such as various job training and Workforce Competitiveness grant programs which were cut this year only 15%.

The case that arts and culture is an economic generator has been made by both state and nationally funded studies. Organizations receiving grants from Basic Cultural Resources grants in FY10 provided over 700 full-time jobs and 2,413 part-time jobs. They also engaged nearly 12,000 unpaid volunteers whose services equaled 450+ full-time jobs. These grants, which on average represent only 1% of organization funding, are important to organization credibility with other funders who match granted funds. As you can see, a little goes a long way, but cuts to grant programs that are already cut to the bone do not make sense and can damage the arts sector's ability to continue to provide the programs and services that make CT a great place to live and visit.

**Ryan Odinak, Continued Testimony-2-24-11**

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies states, "The arts are an important policy asset and prosperity generator for states. In addition, to their inherent value to society, the arts offer a distinctive blend of benefits. The arts create jobs, stimulate business activity and attract tourism revenue. They foster young imaginations and facilitate children's success in school. The arts create a welcoming sense of place and a desirable quality of life. They also preserve unique culture and heritage, passing a state's precious cultural character and traditions along to the future."

Hard times require public officials to make the most of every asset and to adopt policies that maximize a state's recovery potential. The arts are a proven part of that mix. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the committee.