

Committee on Appropriations
Public Hearing February 15, 2012
Testimony of Elsie Chapman

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the appropriations committee.

I'm Elsie Chapman, Vice Chairman of the Board of the Festival and I'm here to make a case for the International Festival of Arts & Ideas. In light of the Governor's recent budget proposal, I felt compelled to come before you today and testify.

The Festival has produced documented successful results for seventeen years. We have done this in partnership with the general assembly, and with the Governor. This year, faced with the uncertainty of whether the Festival will be funded, at what level it will be funded, and with no criteria having been established for a suggested process, we find ourselves in a very difficult position.

We are now four months from the culmination and associated expenses of a two year planning process that reaches around the globe.

The case for this Festival is clear:

- \$20 million in annual economic impact
- \$4 raised independently for every \$1 in line item support
- \$27 in economic impact for each \$1 of state money spent
- International investment of up to \$500,000 per year
- 150 paid jobs
- Support for over 200 Connecticut artists
- Over 300 hotel room nights
- Engagement of hundreds of vendors, contractors, laborers, and service providers from around the state.

For many years the General Assembly supported this Festival with over one million dollars a year. We ask today for a return of that support, and for the stability of continued line item funding in the State budget.

Doing so will guarantee our ability to continue to enrich the lives of 100,000 people each year. The lives of people who live here, and people who don't. People with resources, and people without. People who could make different choices about how and where to spend their creative capital and their discretionary dollars, or Euros, or Yen, but who choose to spend them here, in Connecticut, with us.

Thank you.