

O<sup>the</sup>Neill  
eugene o'neill  
theater center

Commerce Committee  
Connecticut State Legislature, Room 110  
Connecticut State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06106

March 2, 2012

Dear Chairmen LeBeau and Berger:

In 1966, I arrived at a brand new theater on the Connecticut shore as an intern, responsible for lawn-mowing and facilities maintenance. In between carving out a new amphitheater next to an old barn, I began working with the incredible playwrights, directors, and actors who were also spending their summer at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, with work so inspiring that I spent the next two summers there too.

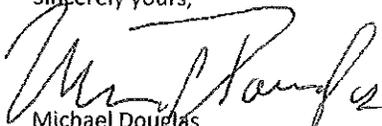
Since its founding, the O'Neill has pioneered the discovery and development of new playwrights, actors, and artists for the stage – hosting some of the biggest names in American playwriting, including: August Wilson, Wendy Wasserstein, John Guare, Adam Rapp, Israel Horowitz and hundreds more. The musicals *Avenue Q*, *In the Heights*, and *Nine* all got their start at the O'Neill. Danny DeVito and I met there as teenagers, and I could tell you stories of the trouble we got into.

I would not be who or where I am today without the O'Neill. It is a magical place, and one of the most important influences on my life and career, and why I've served on the O'Neill's Board of Trustees since 1980.

As such, I am taking the unusual step of writing you directly, and ask that you help support this vital and important institution, and its mission. Just last year, I had the honor of introducing the O'Neill's Tony Award for Regional Theater on the CBS telecast, the second Tony the O'Neill has received for its contributions to the American theater. It was an incredibly proud moment for me, to be able to share with millions of viewers the story and impact of the O'Neill on my life and thousands of other artists.

I hope you will consider the O'Neill's request for \$8 Million in bonding assistance for the construction of new rehearsal, dormitory, and dining spaces for the successful launch of a national new musical theater training program for undergraduates. The program, which will be part of the O'Neill's renowned National Theater Institute will make Connecticut a major player on the world stage in musical theater education. I know it will bring not only acclaim to the state, but dozens of permanent jobs. There is no equivalent program in existence.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Douglas  
Trustee