

CULTURAL ALLIANCE OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY
Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
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My name is Elisabeth Morten. I am president of the board of the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County, an organization that relies on funding from the State of CT to provide services to over 250 member organizations and thousands of arts and cultural audiences throughout our region. I'm here to remind us why arts and culture are critical to this state and to ask you to preserve funding.

In 2011, the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County partnered with Americans for the Arts to study the economic impact of arts and culture in our region.

77 cultural not-for-profits participated, out of a total of over 250 in Fairfield County. Those 77 provided:

--\$130 million to the economy

--4,000 full-time jobs

--\$88 million in household income, and, most important from the State's perspective:

--\$5.8 million in state government tax revenues, a huge return on the State's investment.

They utilized 7,000 volunteers, at a rate of 360,000 hours for an additional \$7.7 million in economic value to the community.

Arts and culture make our state a vibrant place to live. Businesses get it. Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County has been asked by a major corporation in Stamford to develop a recruiting tool to showcase arts and entertainment in our region so it can attract young professional talent.

Arts and culture change lives. More and more research focuses on the importance of life skills that are developed through interaction with the arts, skills should not be denied to anyone, especially our underserved populations who need them most.

For 10 years, I was board chair and president of Westport Country Playhouse and I remember Joanne Woodward telling me that she and her husband Paul Newman moved to Westport because they wanted to raise their children in an environment that supported the arts.

Connecticut is one of the most creative places on earth. That creativity provides jobs and a quality of life beyond anything most people on our planet can imagine. It's why we choose to live, to work and to spend our tax dollars here. And it's something we have to