

HILL-STEAD MUSEUM

Appropriations Committee

RE: H.B. No. 6350 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE

Testimony of: DEBRA K. PASQUALE, Interim Executive Director

Chairwoman Harp, Chairwoman Walker, members of the committee, my name is Debra Pasquale, and as the Interim Executive Director of Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, CT, I'm here to testify on H.B. No. 6350 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE.

I'm delighted to come before you in partnership with six other colleagues who together represent seven independent leading art museums in Connecticut - the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield; Bruce Museum in Greenwich; Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme; Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington; Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London; Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury; and New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain.

Given the steady, reliable impact of our seven art museums on the state economy, we're seeking an annual appropriation of one and a half million dollars (\$ 1.5 million) from the State of Connecticut to be shared equally by our seven member museums. We believe that by working together (instead of competing) this bill is an efficient and effective way for the State to make a relatively small investment that will bring significant return.

This partnership seeks to build upon our already significant contribution to Connecticut's "creative" economy. As a collective we enhance the state's identity as a cultural hub and its attractiveness as a tourism destination.



Our group fully understands that these are difficult financial times. But please consider this, based upon the leveraged return of \$6 for every \$1 invested, the appropriated funds promise to have an economic impact of at least nine million annually.

On the chance that you have not visited, let me tell you a little about Hill-Stead Museum so that you can understand why enhancing collaboration with our sister museums will add further economic value to our state.

A National Historic Landmark, Hill-Stead Museum is a 33,000 square-foot house, built in 1901 and filled with antiques and important Impressionist masterpieces, all in their original setting. Of the 36 residential rooms, 19 are intact and open for public tours. The house rests on 152 acres in Farmington and includes miles of stone walls, woodland trails, a pond, a former farm complex, and a circa 1920 sunken garden.

More than 48,000 visitors came to Hill-Stead Museum in 2012, 10% of these being children from 50 different Connecticut schools. In addition to adult and school age visits to the historic house, the property has hosted the nationally recognized Sunken Garden Poetry Festival for the last 20 years.

The appropriated funds will be designated for increased operating expenditures on exhibitions, programs, and marketing. While a current mechanism for funding exists, this appropriation will provide flexibility and consistency that would promote collaborative efforts to more effectively and efficiently plan exhibits and marketing.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I respectfully request you favorably considering an annual appropriation of one and a half million dollars (\$ 1.5 million) from the State of Connecticut to be shared equally by our seven member museums.