



## FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

Home of American Impressionism

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### Testimony of Jeffrey Andersen

#### 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

Chairwoman Harp, Chairwoman Walker, Members of the Committee, my name is Jeff Andersen. I am director of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme and am here today to testify on behalf of a consortium of seven leading independent art museums in Connecticut that attract over 360,000 visitors to Connecticut each year, providing a steady, reliable economic impact to the State of over \$25 million dollars annually. Our seven museums are a cherished part of why Connecticut is seen as a cultural hub, a tourism destination, and a place with an unparalleled quality of life. When people think about Connecticut, our institutions are what frequently come to mind. We present nationally acclaimed exhibitions and our collections consist of art treasures of incalculable value. I am here tonight to ask you to make an investment in our future – an investment that will be returned to the state's economy. We are seeking an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million dollars from the State of Connecticut to be shared equally by our seven member museums.

Why are we asking this? For the Florence Griswold Museum the purpose is about building audiences and bringing people to Connecticut to experience the Home of American Impressionism. The Museum serves as a gateway destination for southeastern Connecticut, attracting nearly 65,000 visitors annually to see and learn how Connecticut was, and continues to be, influential in shaping American art. We are committed to investing newly appropriated funds in increased and highly targeted program and marketing efforts that will attract thousands of new out-of-state cultural visitors to Connecticut. These visitors will, in turn, stay in our hotels and inns, eat in our restaurants, and support our small retail businesses, spending an average of \$600 per visit. Studies show that the State can expect a leveraged return of \$6 for every \$1 invested in this way. Collectively, this means that the new funds promise to have an economic impact of at least \$9 million annually. I should add that grants and funds currently available through the Department of Economic and Community Development are not sufficient to undertake such activities and this is why we are turning to you.

Our consortium understands that these are difficult times for the State. These are also challenging times for our museums – times that require imagination and new regional-based approaches. By coming together to deepen the impact of what we do best, we believe this is an exciting partnership with the State that can add to the fabric of our

cultural life and contribute strongly to the state's economy. On behalf of our colleagues and the public that we serve, I ask for your support of an appropriation of \$1.5 million dollars to the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.