

Appropriations Committee Hearing, February 21, 2013
Senator Toni Harp and Representative Toni Walker, co-chairs

Testimony of Stuart L. Parnes
Executive Director, Connecticut Humanities

Connecticut Humanities is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), incorporated in Connecticut as a 501(c)3 in 1973. Our mission is to strengthen the civic and cultural life of Connecticut by bringing communities together to share our histories and traditions and to explore ideas that enrich all our lives. We are supported through a combination of federal (NEH) funds, State of Connecticut appropriations, corporate and foundation grants, and private contributions.

Our line item appropriation, now part of the State Library's budget within the Department of Education, provides critical funding for our competitive grants program. These grants are not welfare for ailing organizations. They are strategic investments to non-profit museums, historical societies and cultural institutions in communities all across the state, leveraging matching funds from private sources and reaching extremely broad audiences. Ladies and gentlemen:

- **Connecticut's economy needs us.** Essential to re-igniting Connecticut's lagging economy is our capacity to sustain vital communities that can attract and hold families, businesses, and visitors. Connecticut Humanities' leadership in the preservation and celebration of our diverse cultural heritage contributes directly to the quality of life that makes Connecticut a desirable place to live and to work.
- **Connecticut's communities need us.** Our work brings the people of Connecticut together. As towns and cities are forced to reduce support to all but the most critical social services, CTH grants help keep our museums, libraries and cultural organizations active centers of community involvement and pride.
- **Connecticut's schools need us.** We work with families, children and teachers to build the reading and writing skills that are the keys to unlocking student achievement in the classroom. CTH programs help young families begin reading together sooner, help students learn to read and think critically and help teachers find the resources and training they need to stay inspired, creative and effective.

Our appropriation has been cut by 25% since 2009, and the Governor has recommended another 5% reduction next year. While we understand that we must all do our part to reduce our state's looming budget deficit, we hope that cuts to Connecticut Humanities will go no deeper. We will continue to stretch every dollar for the benefit of the communities we serve, and to match every dollar that you provide with both federal and private funds.

With our sincere thanks,

Stuart Parnes
Executive Director

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