

Testimony of Douglas Hyland, Director
New Britain Museum of American Art
March 2, 2015
Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Committee

RE: H.B. No. 6824 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE

Chairwoman Bye, Chairwoman Walker, members of the committee, my name is Douglas Hyland and I am director of the New Britain Museum of American Art. I would like to offer the following comments on H.B. 6824, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017 and Making Appropriations Therefor and Other Provisions Related to Revenue.

The New Britain Museum of American Art is a member of a consortium of seven independent leading art museums in Connecticut formed in 2013 – the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield; the Bruce Museum in Greenwich; the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme; the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington; the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London; and New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain. Our seven museums offer some of the most exciting and stimulating exhibitions to be found anywhere. Our holdings consist of fine and decorative art treasures of incalculable value. Together we enhance the state's identity as a cultural hub, its attractiveness as a tourism destination, and the unparalleled quality of life found here.

First and foremost I want to thank the Administration and the Legislature for including the Consortium as an item in the budget last year. The Consortium was appropriated \$ 525,000. What is unique about our group is that we have agreed to divide the funding equally between our seven institutions, focusing on unity to attain the flexibility and consistency of steady funding that will enable us to better plan exhibits and programs while strategically targeting our marketing efforts to maximize the use of these funds.

For us at the New Britain Museum of American Art it has provided us with the opportunity to

- Achieve our highest visitation ever at 96,880.
- Serve over 12,000 children and students, living in more than 70 cities and towns in the state.
- Present 26 exhibitions, 116 events and 1,500 activities including tours, lectures, films, studio classes, musical performances and other stimulating programs.

- Offer the lifelong learners of our region, from young professionals to seniors, an engaging, stimulating, safe place to come together in community.
- Collaborate with and promote hundreds of artists, businesses and organizations in the area, from food trucks, to musicians, to trunk show artists and crafters.
- Promote the Museum, Central Connecticut and the state as a cultural tourist destination. The Museum attracted to Connecticut visitors from 48 states and abroad.
- Support 177 Full Time Equivalent jobs and generate an economic impact of over \$5 million according to Arts USA's Arts & Prosperity Calculator.

As a result of the vitality of the Museum and its good standing in the eyes of the public, we were given over 500 works of art last year so that now the Museum houses over 14,000 examples by the leading American artists in all media for the enjoyment for the citizens of our state.

Most importantly, unrestricted state funding allowed us to continue the momentum of our operations, positioning us well for the opening of our new 17,346 sq. ft. wing, in October 2015, which will provide seven more galleries and three art studios for the enjoyment of the public.

Collectively we also represent a significant impact for Connecticut in creating jobs, attracting visitors and increasing State revenue. Our museums employ people locally, purchase goods and services from within our communities, and market and promote our regions. Every year we are host to hundreds of thousands of visitors from New England, New York and New Jersey and across the country. Our visitors stay in hotels, eat in restaurants and purchase goods in our shops. A study in 2012 by AFTA showed that "cultural tourists" spend an average of 65 percent more than other visitors.

We fully understand that these are very difficult financial times for the state. We believe that we have shown that by working together (instead of competing) we have achieved an efficient as well as an effective way for the State to make a relatively small investment that will bring a very good return. The AFTA report clearly showed that there is a leveraged return of \$6 for every \$1 invested by the State. Therefore, the investment requested by our consortium will have a collective economic impact of at least nine million dollars annually or each of us will be able to have an economic impact on our respective regions of over \$1.2 million.

My colleagues and I hope to have the opportunity to continue to build upon our already significant contribution to Connecticut's "creative" economy and ask that funding for the Consortium remain included under DECD Conservation and Development in this new Biennium Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this request with you on this important issue.