



FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

Home of American Impressionism

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Testimony of Jeffrey Andersen, Director
Florence Griswold Museum
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 Jeffrey Andersen and I am director of the Florence Griswold Museum. 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 Florence Griswold Museum 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 Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury; the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain; the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington; the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London; and the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme. The Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums offers some of the most exciting and stimulating exhibitions to be found anywhere. Our holdings consist of fine 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 appropriating \$525,000 to the Consortium in last year's budget. What is unique about our group is that we agreed to divide the funding equally between our seven institutions, focusing on a unified effort 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.

I can attest to how effectively this is working at the Florence Griswold Museum. New exhibitions and public programs, accompanied by highly targeted marketing plans, are helping us to bring thousands of people to Connecticut to experience the home of American Impressionism. As a result we are serving more visitors and residents than ever before, including grassroots educational outreach into Connecticut's schools. In fact, only today, our Museum hosted over fifty art teachers from around the state for a full day of museum-based teacher training. Activities such as this will impact the lives of thousands of students in our state's rural, suburban and urban schools.

Collectively we are making a significant economic impact 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 2012 study by Americans for the Arts 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. But we have shown that by working together (instead of competing against one another) we have achieved an efficient and effective way for the State to make a relatively small investment that will bring an excellent return. The AFTA report calculates a leveraged return of \$6 for every \$1 invested by the State. Therefore, the investment requested by our consortium has a multiplying economic impact of over \$3 million and that the total economic impact of our seven institutions is \$22.45 million.

My colleagues and I hope 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 you on this important issue.