

The BARNUM



MUSEUM

Date: March 6, 2015

To: Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee
Senator John W. Fonfara
Representative Jeffrey J. Berger

Regarding: Testimony regarding elimination of the Community Investment Act

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to submit testimony related to the preservation of the Community Investment Act. My name is Kathleen Maher and I am the Executive Director of the Barnum Museum in Bridgeport.

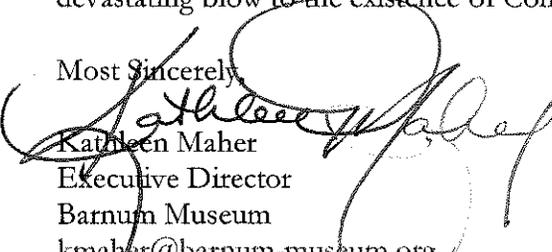
The Barnum Museum has been in service to the citizens of Connecticut since it's opening in 1893, and it is estimated that well over 3 million learners from around the world have visited the Museum. It has been a vibrant source of education, an iconic destination for lifelong learners, and one of the region's most intriguing economic drivers. It has survived everything from great depressions, to an onslaught of natural disasters.

Most recently, as many might remember, the Barnum Museum suffered catastrophic damaged from an EF1 tornado that ravaged downtown Bridgeport in 2010, with additional destruction from both Hurricanes Irene and Sandy. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the CT Trust for Historic Preservation and CT Humanities were immediate responders to the devastating aftermath of these horrific storms. With their support, the Barnum Museum was able to secure urgently needed funding to stabilize the landmark building, protect the collection, and begin the complex process of recovery and restoration. Our work continues.

With over \$484,000 in CIA grant funding, the Barnum Museum leveraged, dollar-for-dollar, CIA support amounting to more than \$968,000 in direct investment in historic restoration activity. I am proud that the State of Connecticut acted to preserve Connecticut's iconic heritage, and every CIA dollar has been invested to ensure that this remarkable American landmark will survive for future generations.

Without continued CIA funding the Barnum Museum's future is uncertain. I humbly ask the Members to fully support the continued authorization of CIA and not allow this impending sweep to be the final devastating blow to the existence of Connecticut's historic Barnum Museum.

Most Sincerely,


Kathleen Maher
Executive Director
Barnum Museum

kmaher@barnum-museum.org

"The Noblest Art Is That Of Making Others Happy" P.T. Barnum, 1886

