

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
February 10, 2016**

TESTIMONY OF

**THE BUSHNELL
&
CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
CAPA - SHUBERT THEATER
&
PALACE THEATER
&
STAMFORD CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

Good evening members of the Committee. My name is John Fisher and I am the Executive Director for the Connecticut Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA) and the Shubert Theatre in New Haven.

I am Cathy Nonnenmacher, Chief Financial Officer of the - Stamford Center for the Arts: Palace Theatre.

I am David Fay, President and CEO of the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts and a board member of the Connecticut Arts Alliance (CAA).

I am Frank Tavera the Chief Executive Officer of the Palace Theater in Waterbury and also on the Board of the CAA.

Again collectively, we are here representing the previously designated funding identified as the "Performing Arts Centers". First, we extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Committee, to the General Assembly and to the Governor for the financial support that has been provided to us in past years. Its positive impact on our institutions and the communities which we serve is immeasurable. Nevertheless, together we are here tonight to voice our concern over the Governor's current budget proposal, which includes:

- the elimination of our direct line item of support,
- an additional 25% decrease in funding for the arts, on top of the 10% decrease we have already experienced and
- the consolidation of all grant funding to be managed by Comptroller's Office in a competitive grant pool process.

Over the past years during these hearings, we have represented ourselves as independent and unique institutions that, although different, share a common mission. This committee has always seen fit to support the cultural and artistic value of our organizations, appreciating that as cultural anchors in our communities it is the Palace Theater in Waterbury, the Shubert in New Haven, the Bushnell in Hartford and the Stamford Palace Theatre that serve:

- as vehicles of effective arts and education initiatives in our area schools,
- as gainful employers of both full time and seasonal workers boasting over 750 immediate employees

- as a catalyst for economic spending in our communities, annually welcoming over 600,000 patrons generating over \$55 million dollars in impact to our local areas
- to improve the quality of life in our communities and working collaboratively with other arts organizations in efforts to make our cities viable places to work, live and play.

Historically we have served as good financial stewards of the state funding, consistently leveraging our annual support by insuring a positive return on the state's investment to Connecticut and its municipalities. One can calculate our ROI to the state at 39 times the level of funding we directly receive, proving the arts is a secure and smart investment in our state economy. Not only can we quantify the positive financial impact we have in our communities, but our collective organizations can also boast an enormous positive impact we have on the psyche of

our state residents. In a time when residents and businesses are choosing to relocate, it is imperative that organizations like ours remain active and stable to insure that we can continue to enhance the quality of life of our throughout Connecticut.

The Governor's budget proposal puts our organizations in jeopardy. The uncertainty of funding could directly impact our ability to hire or maintain staffing levels and directly impact our ability to deliver on subsidized programs to educational institutions, local arts organizations and other non-profit groups.

We understand the State is facing enormous financial challenges and appreciate the need for reasonable and equitable cuts to be endured by all. With that, we do stand united in our request to maintain our directed Line Item of support and allow us to effectively and responsibly manage those funds for the betterment of the state and your constituents.

As "not-for-profit" performing arts centers, who rely on private and public support to insure achievement of our missions, we especially appreciate your acknowledgement of and continued financial support for the critical role we play in enhancing our state through the power of the arts.

We are grateful for your support and leadership. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



David Fay
President and CEO



Cathy Nonnenmacher
CFO



Frank Tavera
CEO



John Fisher
Executive Director