HARTFORD STAGE

50 Church Street
Hartford, CT 06103
P: 860-525-5601
F: 860-244-0183
Box Office 860-527-5151
www.hartfordstage.org

Darko Tresnjak, Artistic Director
Michael Stotts, Managing Director

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State of Connecticut
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to you today as a Board Member of the Hartford Stage Company, one of the six CT Flagship Producing Theaters which receives a line item grant from the State Department of Economic and Community Development.

Thank you for recognizing and supporting the valuable impact that these theatres have in our communities. Today I ask you to continue recognizing this impact and sustain the CT Flagship Producing Theatres line item in the FY18 and FY19 biennium budget.

I stand besides my board colleagues from each of the six theaters who are leaders of major businesses and organizations throughout our state. We advocate for the vital *economic* and *community* impact these theatres collectively have on our region.

Their contribution represents millions of dollars in taxable payrolls, material purchases, and rentals. Their contribution creates more than 1,700 jobs and reaches 388,000 patrons and 40,000 students annually. Their contribution has garnered national and international accolades which bring prestige to our home. The return on the State's investment is consistently over 400%.

Elimination or reduction of this investment will have a direct and negative measurable impact on our local economy and vitality of life. As businesses and residents make decisions to relocate outside of Connecticut, it is essential that organizations such as Hartford Stage, sustain the ability to fulfill their missions; please consider retaining their appropriation.

Sincerely,

Judith E Thompson

Hartford Stage Board Member