

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6692
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM GRANTS.
Vote Date: 3/9/2023
Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Finance, Revenue and
Vote Action: Bonding
PH Date: 2/23/2023
File No.:

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REASONS FOR BILL:

Arts, culture, and tourism organizations have historically been underfunded in comparison to other states. For every \$1 Connecticut invested per capita in arts and culture in 2020, Massachusetts and New York invested \$1.60 and Rhode Island invested \$2. At \$1.11 per capita, pre-pandemic state funding for tourism ranks lowest among surrounding states, with Rhode Island investing \$5.05, New York investing \$3.07, and Massachusetts investing \$1.65. Arts and cultural organizations around the state have called for consistent funding over time to minimize operational disruption, improve long-term planning and sustainability, and maximize the return on the state's investment. Tourism organizations and groups have requested equal access to funding opportunities so that Connecticut can compete with neighboring states for visitors. HB-6692 aims to increase funding in both the short and long term for arts, culture, and tourism organizations around the state.

Substitute Language: (LCO 5399)

Repealed Sec. 4 Subdivision (1) of section 12-408 of the general statutes; added ten pages of statutes.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Alexandra Daum, Commissioner, DECD, Opposes

Ms. Daum believes HB-6692's statutory changes are unnecessary. Section 1 of HB-6692 would require the Connecticut Office of the Arts to have their ability to provide grants or loans for statewide marketing, infrastructure, or workforce development expanded; Ms. Daum believes this is unnecessary. Ms. Daum does not agree with the intent of Section 2, she thinks statewide marketing should be conducted by the Connecticut Office of Tourism instead of the Connecticut Office of the Arts. Furthermore, she believes Section 3 is unnecessary, the Connecticut Office of Tourism would require additional resources to administer a new grant program over and above their existing responsibilities and already develops a statewide marketing plan, which is reviewed and approved by the Connecticut Tourism Council.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Numerous members of arts and cultural organizations in the state support HB-6692 and its mission. They believe HB-6692 will help increase the amount of state support their organization receives in both the short and long term. These members detailed the struggles they faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how additional funding would assist the maintenance and growth of their organizations. Additionally, they believe the benefits their organizations provide to local and regional communities are well worth the investment.

- Brett Abbott, Director and CEO, NBMAA, Supports
- Peter Adomeit, Chairman of the Board, Litchfield Performing Arts Inc, Supports
- Camille Alberti, Trustee, Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts, Supports
- Anonymous Anonymous, Board Member, Arts Escape of Southbury, Supports
- Carol Ansel, Library Director, Godfrey Memorial Library, Supports
- Corinne Bachand, Treasurer, East Lyme Puppetry Project Inc., Supports
- Eileen Bakos, Director of Development, Discovery Museum Inc., Supports
- Jim Bellano, Chair, Eastern Regional Tourism District, Supports

- Bert Bernardi, Co-Producer, Pantochino Productions Inc., Supports
- Evan Burns, President & Owner, Northeast Growth Partners LLC, Supports
- William Bevacqua, President & CEO, The Connecticut Democracy Center, Supports
- John Boccuzzi, President, Friends of Newtown Seniors, Supports
- Sherwin Borsuk, Member of Board of Directors, Meriden Historical Society, Supports
- John Bourget, President, Witan Intelligence Inc., Supports
- Matthew Bragg, Co-Treasurer, Playhouse on Park, Supports
- J. Martin Brayboy, Board Member, Litchfield Performing Arts, Supports
- Jeffrey Brown, CEO, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Supports
- Lydia Brunner, Director of Programming, Ball & Socket Arts and NLCD, Supports
- Gwen Bruno, Windham Preservation Inc., Supports
- Deborah Burke, President, Town Players of New Cannan, Supports
- Frank Burns Jr., Executive Director, Connecticut Tourism Coalition, Supports
- Steph Burr, Executive Director, Northwest CT Arts Council, Supports
- Wendy Bury, Executive Director, Cultural Coalition, Supports
- Rebecca Butler, Founder, Arts Escape, Supports
- Patricia Buxton, Executive Director, Lutz Children's Museum, Supports
- Rie Campbell, Executive Director, Hartford Performs, Supports
- Laurence Caso, Executive Director, The Klein, Supports
- Art Ciley, Co-President, Mad Hatter Chorus, Supports
- Steve Collins, President & CEO, Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Supports
- Melissa Combs, CT Humanities, Supports
- Gregg Dancho, Zoo Director, Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, Supports
- Jane Darico, Member, Friends of Valley Falls, Supports
- Nichole Davison, Supports
- Catherine Del Buono, Executive Director, Our House Meriden Inc., Supports
- Kevin Diaz, Founding Member & Director of Projects, Movimiento Cultural Inc, Supports
- Kevin Dillon, Executive Director, Connecticut Airport Authority, Supports
- Nadia Dillon, Outreach Coordinator, The Barnes Museum, Supports
- Scott Dolch, CEO, CT Restaurant Association, Supports
- Douglas Donato, Executive Director, Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, Supports
- Eileen Donovan, Director of Learning & Engagement, Lyman Allyn Art Museum, Supports
- Jeff Dornenburg, Board Chair, Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, Supports
- Elizabeth Durkin, Development Director, Pilobolus Inc., Supports
- Judy Dworin, Executive and Artistic Director, Justice Dance Performance Project, Supports
- Brett Elliott, Executive Director, Katharine Hepburn CAC, Supports
- Thomas Errichetti, Treasurer, Klein Memorial Auditorium, Supports
- Michelle Begley Fenton, Education Programs Director, American Mural Project, Supports
- Susan Fisher, Executive Director, Mystic Museum of Art, Supports
- Tracy Flater, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Playhouse Theatre Group Inc., Supports
- Rebecca Floyd, Director of Interpretation, The Mark Twain House & Museum, Supports

- Juliana Fodera, Grants Manager, Prospector Theater, Supports
- Marcy Fuller, President, Westbrook Historical Society, Supports
- Lindsey Fyfe, Executive Director, The Sounding Board, Supports
- John Cusano, Principal, Nonprofit Consultant, Supports
- Eric Galm, Professor of Music Dept. Chair, Trinity College, Supports
- Betsy Gara, Executive Director, CT Council of Small Towns, Supports
- Michael Gatta, Box Office Manager, The Kate, Supports
- Polly Geller, VP Development, Greenwich Choral Society, Supports
- Andrew Giering, Board of Directors, Connecticut Arts Alliance, Supports
- Terry Grady, Board Member, Litchfield Performing Arts, Supports
- David Green, Executive Director, Cultural Alliance Fairfield City, Supports
- Ellen Griesedieck, Artist, American Mural Project, Supports
- Jason Guyot, President & CEO, Foxwoods Resort Casino, Supports
- John Hayes, Curator, Hayes Sculpture Fields, Supports
- Kimberly Henrikson, Executive Director, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Supports
- Katherine Harmes, Publisher & Executive Director, Connecticut Explored Inc., Supports
- Kayli Hartel, President, Vernon Historical Society, Supports
- Helen Higgins, Chairman, CT Humanities, Supports
- Sarah Jakubowski, Supports
- Johnny Johnson, Director, The Majorette & Dance Factory, Supports
- Melissa Josefiak, Director, Essex Historical Society, Supports
- Suzanne Kachmar, Executive Director, City Lights & Company, Supports
- Jonathan Katz, Company/Business Manager, Playhouse Theatre Group Inc., Supports
- Jacob Kaufman, Production Manager, The Kate, Supports
- Jennifer Kaye, Director, Housatonic Museum of Art, Supports
- Ginny Kozlowski, Executive Director, Connecticut Lodging Association, Supports
- Robert Kret, Executive Director & CEO, Connecticut Historical Society, Supports
- Alan Lamson, VP, Manchester Center, Supports
- Kyle Lawlor, Museum Coordinator, Naugatuck Historical Society, Supports
- Rachel Lenda, Administrative Partnerships Manager, Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, Supports
- Ann Letendre, Board of Directors, Friends of Valley Falls Inc., Supports
- Sarah Lubarsky, Executive Director, Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, Supports
- Michael Maguire, President & Board of Trustees, Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts, Supports
- Christopher Mandeville, Supports
- Elise Maragliano, Museum Coordinator, The Kate, Supports
- Winter Marshall, Acting Executive Director, Arts Council on GNH, Supports
- Mark Masinda, President, Willington Historical Society, Supports
- Steve Matiatos, Area General Manager, Courtyard Marriott New Haven, Supports
- Michelle McCabe, Executive Director, Connecticut Main Street Center, Supports
- Barbara McClintock, Author & Illustrator, Supports
- Peter McEachern, Litchfield Jazz Festival, Supports
- Mark McKee, Artist, Supports
- Nancy McMillan, Arts Escape Co-Director, Supports

- Chris McNaboe, Board Member, Williamantic Public Art, Supports
- Debra Mecky, Executive Director & CEO, Greenwich Historical Society, Supports
- Cathy Mitchell, Committee Member, ERTD & Coventry EDC, Supports
- Lara Morton, Co-Founder & Artistic Director, FUSE Theatre of CT, Supports
- Robert Murdock, President, CT Convention & Sports Bureau, Supports
- John Murphy, Owner/CEO, Human Arts Media, Supports
- Ruth Napoleone, Development Manager, American Mural Project, Supports
- Laura Natsch, Executive Director, New London Landmarks, Supports
- Cayetana Navarro, President, Cheshire Historical Society, Supports
- Alan Neigher, Board Member, Klein Memorial Foundation, Supports
- Ann Nyberg, WTNH Anchor/ V.P. of The Kate, Supports
- Benjamin Ostrowski, Executive Director, SECT Org. for Racial Equity, Supports
- Jason Patlis, President & CEO, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, Supports
- Ryan Paxton, Executive Director, Eli Whitney Museum, Supports
- Tina Prakash, Board Secretary, Connecticut Arts Alliance, Supports
- Shelley Quiala, Executive Director, International Festival of Arts & Ideas, Supports
- Pieter Roos, Executive Director, The Mark Twain House & Museum, Supports
- Jacob Rosenbe, Supports
- Jack Rushen, President, Artists Ensemble Productions, Supports
- Ellen Sassu, Development Director, Bristol Historical Society, Supports
- Barbara Schaffer, Development Director, Elm Shakespeare Company, Supports
- Richard Seager, Stonington Historical Society, Supports
- Rebecca Selig, Board Member, Playhouse Theatre, Supports
- Chris Senecal, Senior Public Policy Officer, Hartford Foundation, Supports
- Jeff Shaw, Senior Public Policy Advisor, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance, Supports
- Garrett Sheehan, President & CEO, GNHCC & QCC, Supports
- Douglas Shipman, Executive Director, Windsor Historical Society, Supports
- Bruce Sievers, President, East Haddam Historical Society, Supports
- Caroline Sloat, Board Member & Chair of Grants, Performing Arts of NE CT, Supports
- Joseph Smith, Board of Trustees, The Kate, Supports
- Anne Staebner, Program & Education Director, Blue Slope Country Museum, Supports
- Nancy Steffens, Member of the Board of Directors, Friends of Valley Falls, Supports
- Mark Sticca, Grant Manager, Connecticut State Police Museum, Supports
- Kimberly Stoner, Board Member, GNHCC, Supports
- Trica Swain, Board President, Klein Memorial Auditorium, Supports
- Susan Tamulevich, Executive Director, New London Maritime Society, Supports
- Frank Tavera, Rep. for CTPACC, Palace Theater Group Inc., Supports
- Brett Thompson, Executive Director, CT Arts Alliance, Supports
- Maisa Tisdale, President & CEO, Freeman Center, Supports
- Cyndi Tolosa, Development Officer, CT Humanities, Supports
- JoAnne Torti, Executive Director, After School Arts Program, Supports
- Betsy Udal, President, Board of Directors, Playhouse on Park, Supports
- Beth Ulman, Executive Director, Greater CT Youth Orchestras, Supports
- Cindy Vaccaro, Former President, Cultural Alliance FC, Supports
- Kathy Varda, Director, Conservation ConneCTion, Supports
- Norman Wainwright, Senior Director, Charles River Laboratories Inc., Supports

- Lew Wallace, Board Chair, Cultural Alliance of Western CT, Supports
- Martin Wallen, President, LRSB Association of Winchester, Supports
- Brian Wendler, President, Holycroft Foundation, Supports
- Wynn Wilcox, Secretary, Mad Hatter Chorus, Supports
- Amrys Williams, Executive Director, CT League of History Organizations, Supports
- LoriAnn Witte, Director, Glebe House Museum, Supports
- Amy Wynn, Executive Director, American Mural Project, Supports
- Beverly York, Curator, America Museum, Supports

Members of the Mystic Aquarium staff testified along with Mystic Aquarium attendees in support of HB-6692. They believe Mystic Aquarium should continue to receive state funding because it's one of Connecticut's top tourist attractions and provides substantial benefits to the state's economy. Additionally, they explained how Mystic Aquarium is a vital community resource; it provides a safe and fun educational experience for families, supports the EBT program and CT free programs, provides a crucial educational component teaching about environment issues, and grants admission to underserved audiences.

- Eric Anderson Sr., Director of Animal Health & Wellness, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Anonymous Anonymous, Supports
- Eric Bemont, Supports
- Tina Couch, SVP of Development, Supports
- Josh Davis, Supports
- Koray Gurz, COO & CFO, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Laurie Macha, Senior Director of Marine Animals and Birds, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Mairim Martinez, Assistant Curator, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- David Moyer, Senior Director, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Elisse Rosen, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Bryan Schultz, Director of Exhibits, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Meagan Seacor, Vice President of External Relations, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Wylette Selvidio, Administrative Coordinator, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Rosalie Siegel, Exhibit Specialist, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Gayle Sirpenski, Animal Management Specialist, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Keith Sorensen, Sr. VP of Facilities, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Sharon Teel, Dive Safety Officer, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Allison Tuttle, Chief Zoological Officer, Mystic Aquarium, Supports
- Robert Williams, Mystic Aquarium, Supports

Various Connecticut residents unaffiliated with any arts or cultural organization testified in support of HB-6692. They believe arts and culture are vital parts to maintaining a good quality of life in the state and should receive greater funding support.

- David Cochran, Supports
- Dave Macri, Supports
- Ingrid Wood, Supports
- Cindy Martinez, Supports
- Tom Shachtman, Author, Supports

- Kathleen Frederick, Supports
- Andy Stowers, Supports
- Robert Schaufelberger, Supports
- Susan Miller, Supports
- Desire Hinkson, Supports

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

William Hosley, Opposes

Mr. Hosley believes HB-6692's "strategic marketing plan" is insufficient to address the issues in the state's arts, culture, and tourism sectors. He states additional planning, analysis, and reform must take place.

Reported by: Colin DeCure

Date: 4/10/2023