**March 2025 Community Conversation Notes**

**Federal Arts Advocacy**

March 11, 2025

**Questions Asked:**

* Are First Amendment issues related to the NEA grants and required compliance with executive orders being discussed with legislators?
	+ *Yes, we have had discussions with legislators on this issues and encourage advocates to reach out to their Members to express your opinion. You can also ask your Member to introduce legislation to oppose the Executive Orders.*
* What arguments / talking points are resonating with Republican lawmakers, and which aren't?
	+ *Economic impact talking points are resonating with Republican and moderate lawmakers. Learn more about advocacy and our strategies for federal advocacy be watching our* [*Advocacy 101 webinar recording*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0txmwl1eZFI)*.*
* Can you give a sense for what points about arts education resonated most in terms of legislators recognizing return on investment?
	+ *Sharing the tangible impacts of an arts education is resonant across the aisle. Talk about how arts education makes students more innovative and contributes to job preparedness. Check out our* [*Arts Education brief*](https://www.artsactionfund.org/sites/artsactionfund.org/files/arts-ed-funding.pdf) *to learn more about the funding we’re advocating for and how we’re talking about arts education.*
* How much of your meetings covered the current state of funding being held up or potentially cancelled as it relates to cultural diplomacy engagement and exchange programs.
	+ *Our most recent legislative fly-in focused on appropriations for the NEA and NEH, arts education, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as well as two tax policy issues.*
* Can you direct us to an “Arts advocacy for dummies” Section or resource on the AFTA website for those of us who are new to advocacy?
	+ *Check out this resource page on the Americans for the Arts Action Fund page:* [*Advocacy is Year Round*](https://www.artsactionfund.org/advocacy-year-round)
* Can you expand on the key economic impact metrics that were most broadly discussed? Also, what are the specific ESSA reporting requirements that are impacting the arts education?
	+ [*AEP6*](https://aep6.americansforthearts.org/) *is a great way to share the economic impact of the arts with Members of Congress. The ESSA requirements are there to help arts education. Through the requirements, we hope to have a better understanding of how states are using well-rounded funds (Titles I, II, and IV) for music and arts education.*
* Are there any nationwide topics that we can all gather around or that AFTA can specifically champion? How do we simplify that great answer to a common set of talking points?
	+ *AFTA specifically champions funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and works in coalitions with many other advocacy groups to address arts education funding issues along with many other arts related policy issues.*
* Was there any discussion of the strong science behind the health benefits of the arts and arts prescribing and its positive effects on education and communities?
	+ *Our most recent legislative fly-in did not cover arts and health issues. Americans for the Arts has an arts and health portfolio. If you’d like to get involved, let us know!*
* What potential impact do the compliance changes have on Congressional Leaders and their priorities?
	+ *As compliance changes were dictated through the President’s Executive Orders, Congress was not involved in the compliance process. While we understand the policitcal environment may have changed since 2016, we are hopeful that our Congressional allies will continue to support the NEA and arts in a bipartisan fashion. There is bipartisan support for Mary Anne Carter, the senior advisor at the NEA.*
* What advice would you give if you desire a career pathway in the arts advocacy world at a local, state, or federal level?
	+ *Career paths take many shapes and there’s no uniform way to start a career in arts advocacy. Anyone can be an arts advocate regardless of their 9 – 5 job. Reach out to the Government Affairs team (**advocacy@artsusa.org**) if you’d like to have an informational interview with a member of our staff.*
* Do you find that meeting with congress/staff who display favorable conversations and position towards the Arts yields actual votes for the Arts on the floor?
	+ *Yes! We have arts champions on both sides of the aisle.*
* What's the vibe on the Hill about the NEA? Will it likely survive this administration?
	+ *The second Trump Administration is more unpredictable than during his first term which is, indeed, cause for concern. We maintain close relationships with Members of Congress to protect funding for the NEA. Arts advocates also play a big role in helping to ensure the survival of the NEA.*
* Could you talk a little bit more about the role of the congressional arts caucus? Is it a value statement or should we encourage them to meet, etc?
	+ *In the past, the Congressional Arts Caucus has focused on bipartisan briefings and issues related to the arts with the goal of educating the entire Congress on arts policy. There is a new Republican co-chair and energy is high to have more briefings and opportunities for Members to visit arts sites. We encourage Members of Congress to join!*
* is there anything we can do right now to help and proactively or prep for the NEAs next budget cycle?
	+ *Share the value of the NEA with your Members of Congress!*
* for those who can’t do fly-ins or their reps aren’t holding town halls. What approach is most effective? Calls, gather donors, community members? Can we forward the link to letters that AFTA offers to other to do their civic part?
	+ *Write to your Members, call them, ask for Zoom meetings, and consistently share the impact of the arts in the community with them. You can share the* [*Arts Action Center*](https://www.artsactionfund.org/arts-action-center) *with people in your community!*
* Have we developed standardized tools (specifically talking points/letters/emails that can we can customized and send to our representatives? For grass roots newbies like myself I would love to be using the same voice as 1,000 of others.
	+ *Check out the Americans for the Arts Action Fund* [*resources site*](https://www.artsactionfund.org/arts-advocacy-tools-resources)*. You can also check out our* [*most recent policy briefs*](https://www.artsactionfund.org/march-2025-legislative-fly)*—used during our March Legislative fly-in.*