

Testimony February 27, 2017

Statement by Representative Alma S. Adams, PhD

Good afternoon Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify about the importance of arts and humanities in our country.

As the representative of North Carolina's 12th Congressional District, a practicing professional artist and arts educator, curator and college art professor for over 40 years, I am pleased to join my colleagues in expressing my support for funding for the National Endowment of the Arts, the National Endowment of the Humanities and arts funding.

The arts and humanities are critical for adding value to our shared culture.

The arts are not just used to mark celebrations, but to challenge our perceptions of society.

The arts connect the past to the present, convey our unique experiences and are presented in many forms.

Museums function as tools to house and preserve our collective history as a nation and binds us together as one community; visual artists reflect on our society and force us to reconcile our past; writers record history and expose and challenge readers to different ideals presented in our

society; and musicians transcend social and cultural boundaries to connect to the listener through the sound of their instruments.

Time and time again, we have made a conscious decision to fund the arts, signaling that we intrinsically value the arts as being crucial to our collective identity.

The National Endowment of the Arts has been and continues to be necessary to the success of the arts in my home state of North Carolina.

As a representative of Charlotte, one of the largest cities in the South, I understand how important the NEA is to Charlotte's unique and thriving art culture.

In 2016, the NEA invested \$60,000 in grants in Charlotte for programs such as the Children's Theatre of Charlotte Inc.'s performance of the "Journey to Oz" and the McColl Center for Art & Innovation's exhibition and residency featuring Latino and Hispanic artists.

NEA grants make these cultural events possible.

The nationally recognized Charlotte Ballet also depends on the NEA for grants which has allowed this company to create and perform its own unique ballets.

The arts not only provide entertainment, but also encourage us to think critically.

Advocates and researchers have shown that the arts have a positive impact on a young person's development.

Because of this understanding, the arts and music were included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as a part of a well-rounded education.

The NEA is a critical component to ensuring strong arts education in our schools.

Through direct grants, the NEA is able to support crucial pre-K through 12th grade art education projects.

By establishing partnerships with our colleges and universities, the NEA is able to engage with our institutions of higher learning to provide necessary grants to preserve and restore historic works of art.

As a college art professor, I had the privilege of working with the NEA to secure a matching grant which allowed the college to preserve and restore a historic painting by Aaron Douglas, the father of the Harlem Renaissance.

In order to continue to ensure that our students remain competitive in a global economy, we must continue to fund the arts.

In addition to the cultural and educational impact of the arts, the arts play an important role in helping our veterans transition to civilian life and combat physical and mental illnesses.

Through the NEA Military Healing Arts Partnership, the NEA has worked with the Department of Defense to create an art therapy program to treat service-members with traumatic brain injuries and associated psychological health issues at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

This program places art therapy at the center of a multidisciplinary treatment approach.

Through art therapy, our brave service-members are able to receive specialized treatments that enable them to heal both their physical and mental wounds.

Participants in this program have found relief and have seen vast improvements in sleep, communication, pain and their ability to confront emotional challenges.

This program has also invested in critical research on the impacts and benefits of this treatment.

The NEA's budget for Fiscal Year 2017 was \$148 million, just .004 % of the federal budget.

Through a relatively small investment in the arts, we are able to yield large returns.

Not only are the arts culturally significant, but the nonprofit arts and culture sector is an economic driver, supporting about 4.13 million jobs and contributing to a gross domestic product at 4.2 percent or about \$729 billion.

The arts are critical to our culture, education and our economy.

In all respects, it is the arts that make us human.

For this reason, I join my colleagues in requesting \$155 million for the National Endowment of the Arts in the Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations bill.