

Congressman David Price
Testimony Regarding NEH/NEA to the Interior, Environment, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
February 28, 2017

- Good afternoon Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, and the distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the subcommittee regarding the importance of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- As co-chair of the Congressional Humanities Caucus, a responsibility I share with co-chair Representative Leonard Lance, and as a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I am proud to support the missions of these two agencies. As a bipartisan caucus, we support the efforts and contributions of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an agency that has broad impact on districts across our nation, both rural and urban.
- Since its inception, NEH grants have leveraged more than \$4 billion in matching grants for the humanities.
- In 2016 alone, federal NEH museum grants leveraged \$33 million into an additional \$104 million – quite the return for the American taxpayer.

- Further, every federal dollar state humanities councils gave out in grants since FY 2015 leveraged \$5 at the local and state levels.
- The agency has also been a pioneer in the digitization of material, leading an effort to make the humanities more accessible to all Americans, especially in rural areas.
- These projects run the full gamut of Americana and our unique history, from the electronic publication of Alexander Hamilton's Federalist Papers to a virtual gallery of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.
- NEH funds reach Americans in every state and of all walks of life. Despite broad reach and participation, grant allocations are actually relatively small and target unique projects that expand untapped research and knowledge.
- The NEH remains the single most important source of federal funding for research and scholarship in history, literature, foreign language, and other fields that provide us with a rich and dynamic ethical, cultural, and historical perspective.
- Similarly, grants derived from the NEA help us glimpse through the keyhole of history, discovering the complex social, economic, and political environments of the past. From these, we stitch together the very fabric of what makes us human, compiling narratives of how and why we are here.

- The NEA's effectiveness is due, in part, to the programs' robust system of partnerships with state art agencies, local leaders, and the philanthropic sector to promote arts education and community accessibility to the fine arts. We see this through the Congressional Arts Competition.
- Not only do these programs have a cultural impact, they have a profound economic one as well. The NEA helps support 4.7 million jobs and \$698 billion in economic activity.
- I know there are a number of news reports about the future of NEA and NEH funding, including proposals from outside groups to eliminate their funding completely.
- We simply must reject this misguided approach.
- As a senior member of this Committee, I know all too well that difficult choices are ahead for each of these subcommittees, and I hope we can all agree that these decisions should be rooted in facts.
- As it relates to the NEA and NEH the facts are clear – millions of jobs and hundreds of millions in direct economic activity, and broad public support.
- To quote Thomas Campbell, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Eliminating the NEA would in essence eliminate investment by the American government in the curiosity and intelligence of its citizens."

- NEA and NEH grants signal to private investors that the research pass vigorous standards to receive investment by our government.
- Instead of eliminating our government's modest level of support for the NEA and NEH, we should hold steadfast in our investment, which is one of the most efficient we make in terms of leveraging private, non-profit, and corporate dollars. NEH matching grants over the last 40 years have generated more than \$4 billion in private funds for the humanities.
- Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of these agencies and I encourage the subcommittee to diligently review the nationwide effects of arts and humanities and to continue to provide support for them.