

Interior Member Day Remarks

Rep. Louise Slaughter, NY-25

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of the committee this afternoon in support of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and National Gallery of Art.

As you're aware, the NEA's mission is to strengthen the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation. The endowment fulfills its mission through direct grants, reviewed and recommended by panels of experts, to arts organizations across the country. In FY 16, these grants reached more than 20 million people attending live arts events through NEA supported programs, reached 300 million through television, radio, and cable broadcasts, and impacted 16,000 communities engaged in NEA supported projects. These projects have generated more than \$500 million in matching support.

Most importantly, the NEA has expanded their reach to help servicemembers who have been diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and other psychological health conditions. Last October, the NEA announced the expansion of their Creative Forces Partnership with the Department of Defense, an increase of \$1.928 million in FY 16, made possible by this Committee's work. I would like to thank the Committee for approving that increase and recognizing the importance of this program.

This partnership is critically important. The NEA Creative Forces Military Healing Arts Network is a collaboration with the Department of Defense which supports music, writing, and visual art therapy at military care facilities. The Creative Forces program places creative arts therapies at the core of patient centered care in military medical facilities and invests in research on the impacts and benefits of these innovative treatment methods.

These cost effective, non-invasive arts therapy programs rank consistently in the top five “helpful” and “wish to continue programs” on patient satisfaction surveys of men and women who have gone through the program and over 85 percent of military patients said art therapy was helpful to their healing. Through art therapy programs, our servicemen and women can transition away from large numbers of prescription medications to art therapy programs which allow for healing, psychosocial skill building, and self expression directly correlated to an increase in quality of life after finishing their treatment.

As part of the NEA’s mission to increase access to the arts for all Americans, Creative Forces enables more servicemembers, veterans, and military families to benefit from creative arts therapies and community arts activities.

The investment we make in the arts at the federal level, \$148 million in FY 17, is just 0.004 of the federal budget and costs 47 cents per capita. This small investment returns an unmatched amount of private funds back to the US. For every \$1 NEA grant dollar, 9 dollars from the

private sector are leveraged. The non-profit arts industry supports 4.13 million jobs, and the arts and cultural sectors contribute \$729 billion or 4.2 percent of national GDP.

I would also like to mention the National Gallery of Art, that national treasure at the base of Capitol Hill. This subcommittee has historically provided the necessary funds to maintain its iconic buildings, secure its world class art collection, and protect its staff and the millions of visitors who come from all around the country to see the nation's fine art collection. I do hope that the subcommittee will continue to support and protect this gem on the National Mall.

As President Lyndon Johson said: "The arts and humanities belong to the people, for it is, after all, the people who create them." Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you today and I hope that the Committee will continue to support the NEA as it has in the past.