

**COMMERCE COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
2/11/2021**

**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT FLAGSHIP PRODUCING THEATRES
IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED BILL 6119**

AN ACT CONCERNING ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING

On behalf of the Connecticut Flagship Producing Theatres (CFPT) which include Goodspeed Musicals, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, Westport County Playhouse and Yale Repertory Theatre, we are submitting testimony today in support of Proposed Bill 6119, An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding. We first want to start by saying thank you to the Commerce Committee and your colleagues in the legislature who continue to recognize and support us.

The CFPT was formed in 2014. Our theaters, like many others across the state continue to feel the profound impact of COVID-19 on our business, employees, and the community around us. We support this proposal to increase funding from 10% of the lodging tax to 20% which will result in an overall increase of \$20 million. We support this as smart policy.

Unlike many of the performing arts centers with which you may be familiar, the Flagship Producing Theatres, each of which is a non-profit organization, create theater from scratch, right here in Connecticut, annually infusing the state with \$42 million in economic activity.

Collectively:

- We create more than 1,488 jobs for artists and administrators right here in Connecticut
- We spend just under \$24 million in taxable payrolls

- We purchase local materials in excess of \$12.4 million
- We spend nearly \$2.3 million on local printing and advertising and over \$1.3 million on hotel nights and apartment rentals for guest artist housing
- We attract nearly 328,000 regular patrons
- The return on the State's investment is consistently over 400%

In a recent economic impact study conducted by the Americans for the Arts, the direct economic impact of all the arts in Connecticut in 2010 was \$455 million. Approximately 10% of that total spending comes from our six flagship producing theatres, which serve residents from all over the state and attract thousands of patrons from outside of the state.

Beyond our *economic* impact we also have an essential *community* impact. Each of our organizations has partnerships with schools and local organizations, offering a vast array of programs ranging from student matinees to library discussions on inclusivity to training teachers and young theatre professionals. Collectively, we serve over 40,000 students of all ages throughout the state.

Finally, our organizations continuously receive national recognition which enhances Connecticut's reputation across the country. In 2014, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* premiered on Broadway and won four Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Productions at our theatres have collectively won nearly 100 national awards, including 5 Tony Awards for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Our reputations across the field remain well-known.

Many times over the years, our organizations have received national recognition which enhance Connecticut's reputation. Most recently, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* won four Tony Awards, including Best Musical. This show premiered at Hartford Stage Company. Connecticut was also represented in New York with *The Realistic Joneses*, which

premiered at Yale Rep, and Long Wharf's production of *Satchmo at the Waldorf*. Our productions have collectively won nearly 100 national awards, including 5 Tony Awards for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

Thank you for your time and we urge passage of Proposed Bill 6119, An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding.