

## Testimony in support of HB 6119 – An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding

I am writing in favor of changing the name of the Tourism Fund to “Arts, Culture and Tourism,” more accurately reflecting the current use of the dollars allocated in this fund. This is not a change in function, merely a change in title but it gives honor to the importance of the arts industry in Connecticut by reflecting in the title the use of the fund.

I also codifying the practice of 40% to arts and 60% to tourism. Again, this is current practice but formalizing it as part of the passage of this bill. . While this apportionment could be changed by future legislation, it will offer some level of predictability to both the tourism and arts industries as they plan for the future.

As you know, each night’s stay in a Connecticut hotel is subject to the hotel occupancy tax (as is common practice in other states). The revenue is deposited into the State’s General Fund and a portion of the revenue is allocated to the Tourism Fund (to be renamed Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund (ACT)). At this time only 10% of this tax revenue is appropriate to ACT. This revenue is generated primarily from out-of-state visitors who come for visits, vacations and cultural experiences. A higher percentage of the revenue that is generated by the arts, culture and tourism should be appropriated to these industries. Strengthening arts, culture and tourism through a higher level of appropriation will enable these industries to do more, and attract more visitors. I strongly support increasing the allocation of the Hotel Occupancy Tax to 25% to the ACT.

I encourage you to follow these recommendations, which were endorsed by the Governor’s transition committee for ACT and a Blue Ribbon Commission on Tourism in 2018. Time is of the essence to enact these changes for a brighter and more profitable future in arts, culture and tourism.

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