

February 8, 2021

**Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 6119**

**AN ACT CONCERNING ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING**

Good afternoon Co-Chair Senator Hartley, Co-Chair Representative Simmons, Vice-Chair Senator Cohen, Vice-Chair Representative Rochelle, and esteemed members of the Commerce Committee.

My name is John Fisher, Executive Director of the Historic and Legendary Shubert Theatre and the Connecticut Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA) in New Haven.

H.B. 6119 will substantially strengthen arts and culture funding in Connecticut. The pandemic has devastated Connecticut's creative economy, losing an estimated \$2.4B in revenue with unemployment approaching 60%.

Each year the Shubert Theatre brings in over 125,000 patrons, and provides over \$25 million in economic impact to our area businesses, as well as employing hundreds of workers.

Overall the arts in our region produces \$135 million in direct economic activity, supports 5,600 jobs, and attracts 700,000 attendees annually.

Artists and creative organizations have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but are critical for restoring social connections, building cultural equity and racial justice, and supporting vibrant, healthy communities.

H.B. 6119 will solidify a revenue stream to support our industry, not only so that we can survive the COVID-19 pandemic and reopen our doors when it is safe to do so, but also to insure the arts sustainability well into the future.

We ask for your support and thank you for all of your work on behalf of our community and the citizens of Connecticut.