

**SENATOR PAUL FORMICA**  
TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT

Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue, Suite 3400  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591  
Capitol: (800) 842-1421  
E-Mail: Paul.Formica@cga.ct.gov  
Website: www.SenatorFormica.com



**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER PRO TEMPORE**

**RANKING MEMBER**  
ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE  
EXEC. & LEGIS. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE

Testimony

Commerce Committee Public Hearing

February 11, 2021

*In Support of H.B. 6119 – AAC Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding*

Chairs Hartley and Simmons and Ranking Members Martin and Buckbee, I am Sen. Paul Formica, and I wish to testify today in support of *Raised Bill 6119 - AAC Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding*. Specifically, I want to bring your attention the provision of the bill which speaks to increasing the funding percentage.

A few years ago, the Tourism Fund was established to provide 10 percent of the 15 percent tax levied on hotel rooms to fund the combination of arts and culture venues and for marketing our state to fuel tourism.

Tourism funds directed for marketing gets the people *here* – to our great museums, art galleries, parks, theatres, beaches, resorts, casinos, attractions and restaurants. These destinations are what get people to support our economy and come back to visit again.

Last year the budget invested over \$13 million in this fund. The return on every one dollar invested is three dollars in tax revenue collected to the state. This is money that supports the many worthwhile programs and services that the state offers to those who need it.

Tourism is Connecticut's 8th largest industry supporting 157,000 jobs and billions of dollars each year into the state economy. 2019 was a pretty good year for the industry and our economy, but we all know that 2020 wasn't so hot...

2020 by the numbers ...

- Direct traveler spending down 43%—\$10B to \$5.7B
- State and local tax revenue from traveler spending down 30%- from \$1.023b to \$716m
- Room occupancy tax down 49% from \$108M to \$56M
- Lodging revenue down 49% from \$911M to \$465M

**SENATOR PAUL FORMICA**  
TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT

Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue, Suite 3400  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591  
Capitol: (800) 842-1421  
E-Mail: Paul.Formica@cga.ct.gov  
Website: www.SenatorFormica.com



**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER PRO TEMPORE**

**RANKING MEMBER**  
ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE  
EXEC. & LEGIS. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE

On top that, 20% of the unemployment claims from February to December in 2020 were from the hospitality industry and the Arts, Culture and Tourism sector.

Surrounding states all out spend Connecticut on tourism marketing and we need to catch up to stay even.

I see Rep. Rojas has introduced a similar bill, H.B. 5615 which asks for additional resources for this industry. I know the Representative to be a thoughtful and committed legislator and I would be happy to work with him or anyone in support of promoting the Arts, Culture and Tourism industry.

Thank you and I urge support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul M. Formica", written over a large, light-colored oval scribble.

Paul M. Formica  
State Senator, 20<sup>th</sup> district