

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED H.B. NO. 6119  
FROM: ANDREW FORSYTH, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Dear Co-Chair Senator Hartley, Co-Chair Representative Simmons, Vice-Chair Senator Cohen, Vice-Chair Representative Rochelle, and esteemed members of the Commerce Committee, Arts and culture make Connecticut what it is. They bring people together. They shine spotlights on the issues of our time. They entertain and inspire. Arts and Culture also create jobs and bring tourists to this state and city. Even in purely instrumental terms, you are aware, I know, that arts and culture are excellent investments by the state; each dollar invested in the arts generates seven dollars of revenue to state government.

Support for arts and culture is needed now, with heavy unemployment and losses from the pandemic, and for the future, to ensure a thriving sector in our state.

I write in a personal capacity in support of HB 6119. I serve as president of the board of Elm Shakespeare Company, which offers world-class professional classical theater free of charge in New Haven. Before the pandemic, the company drew audiences of 30 thousand over three weeks in the summer. The company works year-round with 500 students in residences at local schools and organizations, and through ongoing programs.