



JACOB G. PADRÓN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KIT INGUI MANAGING DIRECTOR

**\*Proposed H.B. No. 6119 AN ACT CONCERNING ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING**

February 10, 2021

To the esteemed members of the Commerce Committee:

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Long Wharf Theatre, a nonprofit producing theatre committed to telling stories through the lens of radical inclusion, artistic innovation, and kaleidoscopic partnerships.

The arts sector in Connecticut provides more to the state than its significant economic impact. We are bridge-builders, linking communities through the power of storytelling in all its forms. We are soul-healers, providing space for joy, connection, and reconciliation even during this time of isolation. We are change-makers, using our art to progress conversations around racial inequity, income disparity, environmental sustainability, and the myriad challenges faced by our communities. We are voices that encourage our communities to hear, see, and address these challenges.

The pandemic has devastated Connecticut's arts organizations. Hundreds of arts groups in the state are on the verge of collapse. We have lost most of our earned revenue opportunities and are surviving on critical support from individual donors, private foundations, and the federal government's COVID relief programs. It is imperative that the state provide significant support to keep this sector from collapsing.

H.B. 6119 is an immediate and sustainable investment in Connecticut's arts sector. By acknowledging the connection between a thriving arts ecosystem and a thriving tourism industry, this fund supports both. By helping to refill the Tourism Fund's depletion due to the impact of the COVID pandemic and then sharing this fund in a manner that supports sustainability of the arts sector, we could soon see arts funding at levels approaching our neighboring states.

We must acknowledge that the infrastructure of our shared humanity is at risk, as evidenced by the storming of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. If we are to repair this foundational element of our society, we must use our best tools. The arts are crucial to this work. As we continue to face the realities of a world forever changed by COVID and work together to change systems of oppression and racial inequity, the state of Connecticut NEEDS the arts to help guide these conversations. Please consider this an investment in the future of humanity.

Thank you for considering this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kit Ingui".

Kit Ingui  
Managing Director  
Long Wharf Theatre

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