

February 10, 2021

The honorable **Quentin Phipps**
Legislative Office Building, Room 4000
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear **Representative Phipps**,

My name is **Liz Lalor, the Managing Director of Oddfellows Playhouse** and I am writing to you to ask for your support of bill number **HB 6119** that will greatly affect the Arts and Culture community.

- **Increasing the support of arts enrichment organizations who are struggling to keep their doors open amidst a pandemic**

This is vitally important for myself as an **administrator of a 45 year old arts organization** because **after 11 months of a pandemic, we need support more than ever to be able to recover and sustain the arts education and enrichment we have been providing for decades. In 2020, we lost thousands of dollars in contracted services & tuition income, as well as ticket sales. Our in person events and classes have been severely impacted and our virtual classes are not as well attended, nor do we charge our pre-pandemic prices. The arts are not only an important part of socioemotional development for children, they serve as a major economic driver in CT, bringing thousands of visitors and residents together to enjoy the arts and culture CT has to offer.**

I would like to share a brief generational success story. A large family of underserved children were heavily involved in Oddfellows' programming in the early 90s. At the time they received 100% financial aid to participate. In April 2020, two of those children, who now have kids of their own, made donations of over \$100 to support us. And one of them paid full tuition for their child to attend our virtual programming. They accredit Oddfellows Playhouse as a major factor in their confidence and skills to build better lives for themselves as adults. We humbly ask that you help CT keep the power of the arts alive through the enrichment of the youth via the increase in funding from HB 6119.

I urge you to act on this issue in order to make a substantial impact on the Arts and Culture sector in the state. The sector is a critical part of the state's economy and provides enriching programs in our communities.

If you like more information or insight into the impact of this bill on the Arts and Culture community, I would be happy to connect with you, explain my point of view, and provide other resources for you to fully understand the importance of this issue.

Sincerely,

Managing Director of Oddfellows Playhouse founded in 1975

