

Michelle Lapine McCabe
3845 Park Ave #2
Fairfield, CT 06825

February 10, 2021

Re: Support for HB 6119 AAC Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding

To: Sen. Joan Hartley, Sen. Christine Cohen, Rep. Caroline Simmons, Rep. Kara Roschelle, Rep. Bill Buckbee, Rep. Henri Martin, Rep. Mark Anderson, Rep. Michael DiGiovancarlo, Rep. Tammy Exum, Rep. John Fusco, Rep. Jane Garibay, Rep. John Hampton, Rep. Brian Lanoue, Rep. Jennifer Leeper, Rep. Douglas McCrory, Sen. Norman Needleman, Rep. Tammy Nuccio, Rep. Quentin Phipps, Sen. Rob Sampson, Rep. Stephanie Thomas, Rep. Kerry Wood, and Rep. DAve Yaccarino

I am writing in support of HB 6119, which will increase the funding percentage allocated from the Tourism fund to various artists and art organizations.

According to the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut's arts and culture sector represents five percent of the state's economy, generating \$9 billion annually and supporting 57,000 jobs. The arts are a driving factor in bringing people to our state, with 69 percent of visitors coming to Connecticut for arts and cultural offerings. Despite the enormous contribution made to our economy by the arts, funding for this sector has been on the decline. Needless to say, the COVID-19 pandemic did more than exacerbate an already extant problem. In fact, the arts have been particularly devastated, with over 50% of performers unemployed as compared to an 8.5% rate nationally, shows canceled, and galleries shuttered.

It's time for Connecticut to give back to the community that has supported us, not just economically but intellectually and spiritually. Through a percentage increase from the Tourism Fund (a fund that benefits from the excellence of our arts and culture community in the first place), the arts will have access to increased and consistent support that will enable this crucial sector to recover, rebuild and thrive on the other side of the pandemic. I hope that you will vote to approve HB 6119.

Sincerely,

Michelle McCabe