

I am writing in support of increased funding for the arts as described in HB 6119.

My journey to my PhD began as a Mathematics and Music major in college. For various reasons , I had not able to read until I was well out of high school.

Fortunately I had been exposed to music and theater as a young girl and was able to express myself through the language of math and music. I could see the mathematics in the music and found that beautiful. The connection helped me to find my place in the world. Through those years, I learned to play the piano, concert harp, and classical guitar. Those instruments were my ticket into learning history of the composers and allowed me to experience the dynamism of times long ago and far away. The arts added a richness to my world that is beyond words.

If you will allow me a moment to move into Mythology. The 9 Muses of Greek Mythology , those that we see imaged in many paintings as well as on the ceiling of Woolsey Hall in New Haven, those 9 are the children of the goddess of divine memory. The only way we find our way to the richness of our cultural heritage is through the Muses, the arts. One only needs to look at the remarkable young Amanda Gorman, our National Youth Poet Laureate. She was able to capture the imagination of the nation and the world with her exquisite poetic expression of life as a young African American woman. Without the arts, we would have been all the poorer having never been able to understand the cultural experience that she described.

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that the study of and exposure to the arts in youngsters leads to increased academic achievement and literacy, as well as fewer behavior problems in students. Whether that is music, dance, poetry or prose, The richness of human expression is captured in the arts. It's where we thrive beyond the facts. It is where we tell our stories, it's where we imagine our future and the future of our children and their children. We must feed the imagination of our children when they are young. It is , in my opinion, a moral imperative of society.

Thank you,

Carol Rizzolo