



HB 6119, AAC Arts, Culture, and Tourism

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Senator Hartley, Representative Simmons, Commerce Committee members, greetings. I am Lew Wallace and I am Board President of Connecticut Humanities and of the Cultural Alliance of Western CT. While both organizations support this bill. I am writing today on behalf of the smaller of the two, the Cultural Alliance.

The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut is based in Danbury and serves towns in Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield Counties; **Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, and Sherman**. We empower the arts community to grow the economy and enrich people's lives.

We urge your support of HB 6119. The Cultural Alliance receives approximately \$40,000 annually in state funding. We typically leverage these dollars to raise 2 to 3 times that from the private sector. We use those funds to provide services to organizations, artists, artisans, and the public throughout our 280,000-person region. These services include:

- Distribute automated newsletters to promote news and events in our region,
- Provide backroom services for members, i.e., fiscal sponsorship, coaching, technical support, etc.,
- Conduct small business trainings on issues specific to the creative community; and
- Identify and eliminate barriers for participation and engagement by our diverse community.

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Increasing funding to the Tourism Fund, renaming it the Arts, Humanities and Tourism Fund, and maintaining pro rata allocations, would enable us to further grow our regional economy. One of the features unique to Arts and Humanities organizations is that unlike a for-profit business, we will never leave the state. An investment in us, and through us to the over 200 entities in our region, is a permanent investment in Connecticut.

I ask you to please support HB 6119 and increase that investment.

Respectfully,
Lew Wallace