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Connecticut General Assembly
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: H. B. 6119 - An Act Concerning Arts, Culture, and Tourism Funding

As a resident of Middletown, CT, and the director of a museum in Essex, CT, I am writing **in support of HB6119**. This will provide much-needed legislation to allocate needed resources to Connecticut's Arts, Culture, and Tourism sectors.

Arts, Culture, and Tourism play a significant role in creating jobs, additional tax revenues, and improving the quality of life for Connecticut's citizens and visitors. Despite suffering from financial distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, museums continue to serve their communities - from providing spaces for remote and virtual classrooms to providing lesson plans, online learning opportunities, and drop-off learning kits to teachers and families. A recent grant from Connecticut Humanities has made a huge impact on our museum's ability to stay open through the winter, thereby keeping people employed and our property maintained. Throughout the years, funding made available through Connecticut Humanities has made it possible to better serve our communities through educational programs and exhibits.

As we begin to get past the pandemic and hope to recover our local economy and jobs, Connecticut must compete for tourist attention with our neighbors - Rhode Island, New York, and Massachusetts. To do this, we need a larger percent of the hotel occupancy tax directed to arts, culture, and tourism funding. Connecticut's tourism marketing budget is currently much smaller than any of these adjacent states. We should not sell ourselves short. Tourists stay at hotels, patronize restaurants and local shops, and support arts and cultural organizations.

A thriving arts and culture scene not only attracts tourists, but also residents. The arts, culture and tourism sector contributes to a richer quality of life and more diversity of thought. Large scale employers in Connecticut can more easily attract top talent to move and work here when there is a thriving cultural scene.

Please consider supporting jobs in the arts, culture, and tourism sector of Connecticut by passing House Bill 6119.

Thank you for your consideration,

