

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND  
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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April 3, 2017  
Start: 1:51 p.m.  
Recess: 3:02 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers-City Hall

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ELIZABETH S. CROWLEY  
JULISSA FERRERAS-COPELAND  
PETER A. KOO  
STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
ANDY L. KING  
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES  
LAURIE A. CUMBO  
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Neal Shapiro  
President and CEO of WNET

Andrew Ackerman  
Executive Director of the Children's Museum of  
Manhattan

Anne Radice  
Director of the American Folk Art Museum located  
In Manhattan and Queens

Laura Raicovich  
President and Executive Director of the Queens  
Museum

Ellen Kodadek  
Executive and Artistic Director of the Flushing  
Town Hall located in Queens

Kay Takeda  
Vice President of Grants and Services for Lower  
Manhattan Cultural Council

Hannah Jew  
Equity and Inclusion Coordinator at Dance/NYC

Antonio Ponton-Nunez  
Humanities New York

Aaron Bouska  
Vice President of Government and Community  
Relations at New York Botanical Garden

Jennifer Benka  
Executive Director of the Academy of American  
Poets

Justine Nagan  
Executive Director at American Documentary  
Incorporated

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Allie Carieri  
Government Liaison for Roundabout Theatre Company

Judy Kuhn  
Representing Vineyard Theatre

Rachel Feinmark  
Manager of Strategic Communication and Mellow/  
ACLS Public Fellow

David Mutton  
The Moth

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[gavel]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We are good to go. Thank you very much for joining us everyone. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer and I'm very proud to be the Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations and we are officially in session. We have made a lot of noise today on behalf of culture and the arts and libraries and in support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the institute for museum and library services and the corporation for public broadcasting. Today's hearing continues the activism that we were just all engaged in on the steps of City Hall calling on the President to fully fund all of these important agencies and to end his assault on culture, the arts, the humanities, libraries and public television and public radio in this country. I'm thrilled to be joined by a number of my colleagues and we'll be voting on this resolution as we begin this hearing because so many members have been waiting and we have been a little bit late today given the amazing rally that we just held. So, I want to recognize them and then we will call the roll before we hear testimony on the

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2 resolution but joining us today and at the rally  
3 earlier; Council Member Andy King, we're also  
4 thrilled to be joined by some of my Queen's  
5 colleagues, Council Member Constantinides,  
6 Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Council  
7 Member Elizabeth Crowley, and also Speaking... oh and  
8 Council Member Peter Koo and Council Member Helen  
9 Rosenthal who also spoke at our rally just now. So, I  
10 think out of respect for my colleagues and their time  
11 we'll call the roll, we'll vote and then we will  
12 commence with some testimony on this very important  
13 resolution.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Committee  
15 Clerk, Matthew DeStefano, Committee on Cultural  
16 Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup  
17 Relations roll call vote for Resolution Number 1393A,  
18 Chair Van Bramer?

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I vote aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Crowley?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [off-mic] I vote  
22 aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Ferreras-  
24 Copeland?

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COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS-COPELAND: [off-  
mic] I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Koo?

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COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: King?

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COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO:

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Constantinides?

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COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Rosenthal?

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: [off-mic] Aye.

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Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Okay, by a

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vote of seven in the affirmative, zero in the

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negative and no abstentions the resolution has been

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adopted.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very

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much and Council Member King was auditioning for the

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role of Mufasa in the Lion King but having just had

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the real Mufasa from the Lion King in the chambers,

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L. Steven Taylor from Woodside Queens, I just have to

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mention one more time, Andy I think your work is cut

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out for you if you're going to replace Mufasa who's

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currently reigning on Broadway. So, we want to pass

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2 this resolution in the full council in two days  
3 because just as we did on the steps of City Hall we  
4 have to as a city, as a city council and as a people  
5 raise our voices to make sure that the President does  
6 not believe for one second that he can get away with  
7 destroying and gutting the arts, cultures of  
8 humanities in this country. So, it's an important  
9 resolution at an important time for all of us to  
10 speak out in every single way and at every single  
11 moment to make sure that we defeat President Trump  
12 and his desire to destroy what we value all that we  
13 are. So, with that we're going to call some folks to  
14 testify on this important resolution and is Neal  
15 Shapiro here from WNET? Neal, would you approach...  
16 we're going to call four at a time, we're going do a  
17 three minute clock and ask everyone to be as succinct  
18 as possible but we are, are thrilled that everyone is  
19 here and, and testifying, I see Andrew Ackerman  
20 because we were hanging out in your hood yesterday,  
21 we'll ask you to come speak and also Ann Radice from  
22 the American Folk Art Museum and Laura Raicovich from  
23 the Queens Museum, I believe I see her here as well,  
24 that'll be our first panel and then we will continue  
25 to hear from folks and thank you to all for being at

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2 the rally and participating with us, I'm sure you'll  
3 agree it was a pretty spirited and, and meaningful  
4 rally, I felt like it really was. So, Neal if you  
5 want to begin and we'll go down the line.

6           NEAL SHAPIRO: Thank you, I'm Neal  
7 Shapiro, President and CEO of WNET home for your  
8 stations 13 and WLIW21 and thank you for having me  
9 here. I want to thank you first for your ongoing  
10 support for 13, we're grateful for your support of  
11 our efforts to, to live stream meetings for five  
12 community boards in Brooklyn; the Bronx and Queens.  
13 We've already streamed nine meetings, we have another  
14 15 to share. We also want to thank you for supporting  
15 our efforts to create tools for New York teachers in  
16 our curriculum in the areas of climate change and  
17 LGBTQ acceptance and respect. There are a number of  
18 other projects we work on including high quality  
19 educational and informative work. We think that fills  
20 the gap in what's available on network and cable and  
21 what's available at no cost to all our viewers and we  
22 use that content in many ways to go far beyond the  
23 air, that includes PBS morning media where teachers  
24 could light up the classroom with learning resources.  
25 It includes the American Graduate Program where

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2 thanks to CPB we've helped to reduce the high school  
3 dropout rate to a historical low, 16.8 percent. It  
4 includes children's programming and training to  
5 support the path intake center in the Bronx. We  
6 provide worry free entertainment and education for  
7 children during their most stressful time. And right  
8 now, in libraries all across the city there are free  
9 screenings of American Masters Maya Angelou film,  
10 making this important film available to more New  
11 Yorkers and encouraging and supporting conversation  
12 around the city. Thanks to you we work with partners  
13 and community organizations across the tristate area  
14 in places like the Schomburg Center, the Brooklyn  
15 Museum, the Saint George Theater, the Apollo and  
16 dozens more and with your help in CPB we have kept 13  
17 alive. Without this kind of funding small stations  
18 would go first, dozens and dozens of small stations  
19 would have to shut their doors and after that big  
20 stations would be cut, would be hurt too. I say it's  
21 like a big storm, first the beach washes out and the  
22 little homes go first but the big ones follow and we  
23 just can't let that happen. Remember for every dollar  
24 in federal funding we get we raise six dollars more  
25 from others, without that seed funding from the

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2 federal government many projects would never get off  
3 the ground. That's why 13 reaches 4.4 million viewers  
4 per month, people from all ranges and all economic  
5 varieties is why we directly employ 380 people and  
6 employ 100's of more as independent filmmakers and  
7 creatives, it's why we share the great work of arts,  
8 arts groups across the country, it's why thanks to  
9 PBS we can share programs like great performances,  
10 NYC Arts and WLIW Arts feed across the region and  
11 across the country and our local news programs like  
12 Metro Focus have greatly increased the amount of  
13 coverage that... for issues that matter to people in  
14 the tristate area. So, ladies and gentlemen thank you  
15 for having me testify, we're delighted to add our  
16 voice to all the others here and very much support  
17 this important resolution, thank you.

18                   ANDREW ACKERMAN: Thank you, I'm Andrew  
19 Ackerman, Executive Director of the Children's Museum  
20 of Manhattan and thank you Chairman Van Bramer and  
21 Speaker Mark-Viverito for holding this hearing and  
22 for being a champion for the freedom of expression.  
23 Our institution is, is a recipient to funds from the  
24 NEH, NEA and IMLS. Funding is always welcomed but  
25 there's an honor and seriousness of purpose that

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2 accompanies grants that have been reviewed and  
3 approved by peer panels such as those given by three  
4 agencies. Federal funding also provides those of us  
5 who work in cultural institutions with a picture of  
6 what is important in our nation. At the Children's  
7 Museum, we are committed to doing what is good for  
8 children, helping them learn about themselves as they  
9 learn about others. We work in close collaboration  
10 with artists, scholars and members of our community  
11 to help new generations participate in the cultural  
12 and civic life of our city and our country in  
13 compelling, age appropriate ways. Federal support  
14 enables the Children's Museum to share our nation's  
15 fundamental principles with young audiences. At our  
16 museum, this has included introducing children to the  
17 roots of our government as well as the ideas of our  
18 constitution. For example, our "Gods, Myths and  
19 Mortals" exhibition about ancient Greece was funded  
20 by the NEH. A more recent show, "I Approve this  
21 Message," featured the autographs of 44 past  
22 presidents and introduced children to the basics of  
23 the voting booth. Because our institution is based in  
24 one of the most diverse cities in the world, we  
25 choose to highlight how our nation's embrace of

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2 diversity makes us stronger. With funding from the  
3 NEA and NEH, we have explored global cultural  
4 traditions in a celebration of American Pluralism.  
5 Our current cultural exhibit includes "America to  
6 Zanzibar; Muslim Cultures Near and Far," funded by  
7 the NEH, NEA and IMLS. "Hello from Japan", IMLS  
8 funded and The Monkey King; A Story from China." Each  
9 exhibit celebrates where we're come from and who we  
10 are. Each reflects the glory of our country, a nation  
11 of immigrants, a society rich with traditions from  
12 around the world and right here in the Big Apple.  
13 Only in New York City, would you see Orthodox Jewish  
14 families, Korean families and tourists from the  
15 Midwest trying on Senegalese fabrics inside of an  
16 exhibit about Muslim culture. Federal support has  
17 helped the museum become a community forum, a place  
18 for public discourse. Families can explore ideas,  
19 stories, and traditions through the lens of the arts  
20 and humanities. Funding, funding from the NEA, NEH  
21 and IMLS is critical to our ability to inspire  
22 children and families in the great conditions of the  
23 U.S. All children... all children deserve to see  
24 themselves, their cultures and neighborhoods in our  
25 museum. All children need to understand their

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2 importance in the ever-evolving American story.  
3 Federal monies for programs and exhibits let us use  
4 private funding to offer free or reduced museum  
5 admission to low income families who may not  
6 otherwise have the opportunity to visit. Funding from  
7 the federal government has provided us with venture  
8 capital to bring our... bring our work directly into  
9 underserved communities. IMLS provides seed funding  
10 for a national health initiative with Michelle Obama.  
11 The result, our "EatSleepPlay" exhibit and a  
12 curriculum used by early childhood and health  
13 educators across the country. IMLS in support of  
14 HUB's has carried on a great American tradition of  
15 taking care of those in need. Federal funding  
16 inspires institutions to take risks and to innovate.  
17 It has allowed us to celebrate the past and prepare  
18 our youngest citizens to be bold pioneers on the  
19 frontiers of change. A child who is introduced at an  
20 early age to the importance of democracy, the  
21 strength of diversity and the joy of arts and  
22 humanities, will be an adult who embraces our  
23 Constitution and our deeply held democratic values.  
24 Thank you.  
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ANNE RADICE: Good morning, I'm Anne Radice and I have the honor of serving as the Director of the American Folk Art Museum located in Manhattan and Queens. I have enjoyed a long career working as the leader of cultural institutions, private and governmental. Most of my career was in Washington DC where I served, among other posts as the Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts for three years, the Deputy Chairman of Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. I had the largest budget ever granted these agencies and I also augmented the federal money with private funds I raised. While Chair of the Arts Endowment, I wrote an in-depth study about the economic value of the arts, and spent at least two days a week on Capitol Hill fighting to keep the agency alive. We succeeded. How I would have enjoyed talking about the arts as an integral part of civilization, making us better citizens and all the values of experiencing the aesthetics of beauty. However, I felt I needed to talk about... to talk the talk that would give comfort and protection to our elected officials. Jobs does, and that argument

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2 remains today. As Director of IMLS I started a number  
3 of programs that received governmental and private  
4 funding which still exist... why because they had value  
5 and could be sustained... our seed money began the  
6 programs and the success of the concepts like  
7 "Connecting to Collections", the largest conservation  
8 program ever conceived for museums, zoos, aquaria,  
9 historic, arts and libraries is still going strong.  
10 Again, let me recall the mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs.  
11 The small budgets of the NEA, NEH, and IMLS as well  
12 as that of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting  
13 are the seeds of civilized society. The funds are  
14 synergistic and they're matched at least three to  
15 one. Creative expression goes beyond painting,  
16 acting, and singing. It involves design,  
17 architecture, and education. Let us continue to  
18 remind our elected officials that these agencies are  
19 the engines that can. Let us remind our officials  
20 that we are asking for ephemera. I have spent 45  
21 years in the arts. I have had appointments in both  
22 Bush Administrations as well as the first Obama term.  
23 I am a practical business, arts and political animal.  
24 I cannot believe that we are here again begging for  
25 crumbs and knowing that arts unite, create jobs and

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2 as Walter Cronkite said in a video he prepared for me  
3 when I was at the NEA, "The arts make us human."

4           LAURA RAICOVICH: Good afternoon Chairman  
5 Van Bramer, Council Members, staffers and friends. My  
6 name is Laura Raicovich, I am the President and  
7 Executive Director of the Queens Museum and I'd like  
8 to thank you not only for this opportunity at this  
9 hearing but also for the rally that proceeded  
10 outside. Over the course of the past year and  
11 specifically since November 9<sup>th</sup>, I have had hundreds  
12 of conversations with people from all over the world  
13 and all walks of life and each of them centered on  
14 the convergence of the art world and the real world  
15 and what artists and forward-thinking institutions  
16 like the Queens Museum and our colleagues in the room  
17 today can do to benefit both. We believe that great  
18 art changes the way... the ways in which we experience  
19 our world. Particularly at this moment in time when  
20 so many aspects of society require fresh thinking, we  
21 need artists and cultural institutions more than ever  
22 to bring their special skills to the table. Running  
23 the spectrum from our exhibitions through to  
24 education and public programs, the true impact of  
25 this kind of art can be understood on many different

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2 levels; formally, experientially, socially, or  
3 politically and these are each equally important. The  
4 president and administration have already enacted  
5 policies which have left an indelible mark on the  
6 communities the Queen's Museum serves, so rich,  
7 richly diverse neighborhoods like Corona, Jackson  
8 Heights, and Flushing. An undercurrent of fear has  
9 replaced the foundation of optimism that has  
10 characterized Queens for decades. That fear has  
11 manifested itself in myriad ways, but for us at the  
12 museum it means fewer local families coming to our  
13 programs because it just isn't worth risking  
14 deportation to spend at the... an afternoon at the  
15 Museum. It is at a time like this that we must use  
16 all of our resources to offset the negative impact of  
17 recent policies, and it is at this point that we  
18 should be increasing public support for the arts and  
19 humanities, as they are the true vehicles for  
20 creating important bonds between people and allowing  
21 for difficult conversations to be discussed in new  
22 terms. Instead, we are facing the complete  
23 elimination of the NEA, NEH, and IMLS, agencies which  
24 have supported our own endeavors to help each, each  
25 of us gain new perspectives on our daily lives.

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2 Whether it is in support of art therapy workshops for  
3 Latino families with children on the autism spectrum,  
4 artmaking, skill-building, and literacy classes to  
5 adult immigrants offered in 11 different languages,  
6 or virtual museum tours for homebound seniors.  
7 Federal funding enables direct cultural services to a  
8 diverse swath of Queens residents, offering  
9 assistance at a time when these very communities are  
10 at their most vulnerable. Should the proposed cuts be  
11 realized, these programs would most likely come to an  
12 end and the hundreds of people who participate in  
13 them would lose these essential services. Before I  
14 close, I want to mention one more initiative,  
15 Immigrant Movement International in Corona, our  
16 community led artist project which serves more than  
17 35,000 people per year out of its Roosevelt Avenue  
18 storefront. The space serves as a clearing house for  
19 free artistic and social services ranging from  
20 artmaking, homework help and music classes for local  
21 school children, to OSHA safety training for day-  
22 laborers, small business mentorship for local women  
23 looking to start their own businesses and legal  
24 services for those facing immigration issues. This  
25 project, with artist, museum, and community working

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2 all together, does not currently receive any federal  
3 support, however it exemplifies the type of project  
4 that could be springing up throughout the country, is  
5 these agencies are preserved. At a time when the  
6 public is berated with slogans to "put America first  
7 again" or "make America work again," the President's  
8 proposed cuts translate to lost jobs, a general  
9 devaluing of the proven connection between exposure  
10 to cultural institutions and academic success, and an  
11 undercutting of the leverage that encourages private  
12 donors to support cultural institutions. We simply  
13 cannot afford to cut the arts. Thank you for your  
14 time and for taking this important stance against  
15 these ill-advised federal budget cuts. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
17 much all of you. I want to recognize we've been  
18 joined by Council Member's Lauri Cumbo and Stephen  
19 Levin both from Brooklyn and I want to ask you all  
20 one question because I hear this all the time when  
21 people say well you know this has been attempted  
22 before and the NEA and, and CPB and these other  
23 institutions have been threatened many times before  
24 by other presidents, what's different now, why..  
25 because this seems so much more frightening, I'm

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2 interested in, in all of your takes on that  
3 fundamental question because I believe it is  
4 different, I believe we do have to fight like our  
5 very lives depend on it, so who wants to go first,  
6 Anne?

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          ANNE RADICE: As I said we've been here  
8 before but it is different because the way in which  
9 hate has become part of the dialogue and appealing to  
10 people's lowest instincts and making it seem that to  
11 support the arts means that somehow, you're not  
12 American, you're a fool and you're just throwing your  
13 money away but it's done with such vitriol that... it's  
14 the tone I think that makes it different.

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          CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Laura?

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          LAURA RAICOVICH: And I also think that,  
17 you know our values are embedded in the culture that  
18 we produce as a society and I think that we have to  
19 create spaces for that and it's just super  
20 counterintuitive to eliminate any resources from  
21 federal government going to... I mean it's enough that  
22 we don't even have a ministry of culture in this  
23 country now we're going to eliminate all arts  
24 funding, it's not only this kind of anti-intellectual  
25 like populous vibe but it also will, will, will mean

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in many cases the elimination of lots of really small organizations that depend fully on federal funding for their... for the majority of their budget. So not only I think are we fighting for those organizations that are larger and, and, and really count on and not only as a good housekeeping seal of approval but also as sort of fundamental to our core of business but to these much smaller organizations whose very existence relies on it and we count as larger organizations on the production of the smaller groups because what they're doing diversifies the cultural landscape of the country.

ANDREW ACKERMAN: I would say it's twofold, the tone we referred to... when, when children enter the museum and they're crying because of fear of deportation is a completely different environment but second when the president proposes 15 billion dollars to build a border wall he will try to find the money somewhere and even in bits and pieces and the crumbs that can be had for the arts and humanities that's a very different context and we've experienced before because as a financial agenda in addition to a social agenda.

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NEAL SHAPIRO: I'd say to having spent a little time lobbying in Washington that even republicans there will tell you the state rules don't apply, that there was kind of a bit of organized procedure that went beforehand that was a safe vote for many republicans to vote against these things because they knew the democratic senate would put it back but now none of those rules apply. So, everything is up in the air, the budget team is staffed by a bunch of people who've never done it before and I think you really can't predict anything and I think anyone who says there's nothing to fear about doesn't really understand what's happening in Washington.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think... that's what I really wanted to get out of this, that's why we're having this hearing, that's why we're passing this resolution, why we had this rally because to, to sit back on our heels and say well you know they, they always throw these things out, we're going to cut the NEA, we're going to cut the IMLS and... we don't like Public Broadcasting and, and all of those things, they've tried it before, they're not going to do it this time, I personally think that we should

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2 never assume under this administration that they're  
3 not going to do it this time, right, they're not  
4 going to really try and, and, and get this done  
5 because of some of the, the reasons that you all  
6 state and because they lost so badly on Trump Care  
7 and because they now need to demonstrate victories  
8 however you would define that, I certainly wouldn't  
9 define it the way they do that's why we, we have to  
10 fight, we have to do this and, and why I thank all of  
11 you for being engaged in this fight not just today,  
12 not just this year but for decades, all of you in one  
13 way or another have been fighting this fight. So, I  
14 thank you and obviously, you have my support and this  
15 council's support, I'm a little hoarse from the rally  
16 but, but feeling very energized at the same time and  
17 I believe that all of us having demonstrated our  
18 power will continue to do so and, and we will make  
19 sure that we win this fight. So, thank you all very...

20 [cross-talk]

21 NEAL SHAPIRO: Thank you... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...very much...

23 [cross-talk]

24 ANDREW ACKERMAN: ...thank you... [cross-  
25 talk]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...for being here...

[cross-talk]

NEAL SHAPIRO: ...thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...today and I  
want to call up our next panel and then we're going  
to allow the two members who've joined us to, to vote  
as well. Ellen Kodadek from Flushing Town Hall and  
Kay Takeda, is Kay Takeda here and Hannah Jew, is  
Hannah, Hannah is with us, yep Hannah is with us and  
Antonio Ponton-Nunez also with us the four members of  
the second panelist and then I think we'll ask the  
Clerk to call the roll for more votes.

COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Continuation  
of roll call on Resolution 1393A, Council Member  
Levin?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: Council  
Member Cumbo?

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I proudly vote  
aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK DESTEFANO: The final vote  
on the resolution; nine on the affirmative, zero in  
the negative and no abstentions.

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND  
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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much and I want to just recognize Council Member Levin was, was at our press conference twice and rallied with us and I was sorry we couldn't hear from him at the end of the rally when we.. when Council Members spoke but, but Lauri and, and Treyger in particular just really brought it Council Member Levin, so thank you. Who would like to... Ellen do you want to go first then we'll go down the line. Great, thank you and then we have two more panels on this resolution. Your microphone is not on.

ELLEN KODADEK: How's that?

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: There you go..

[cross-talk]

ELLEN KODADEK: Here we go..

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Perfect.

ELLEN KODADEK: Hello again. I'm Ellen Kodadek, I'm the Executive and Artistic Director of Flushing Town Hall located in Queens and I was asked about ten minutes ago to testify, so here I am, I have no prepared remarks. First of all, I want to thank you and all the organizers of the rally this morning, I was particularly proud that Flushing Town Hall had nine employees here all carrying signs

1  
2 saying save the arts in five languages and that's  
3 particularly appropriate for us because we represent  
4 and celebrate and program for the diverse communities  
5 of Queens and of New York City. Our mission as an  
6 organization is to present global arts for the global  
7 communities of New York and on our kids and families  
8 series we present global arts for global kids. So,  
9 when I was asked to testify I said okay what exactly  
10 do you want me to talk about and I was told please  
11 speak about the impact on a small midsized  
12 organization such as Flushing Town Hall. For about 15  
13 years we've received funding from the NEA  
14 particularly to support our global arts and world  
15 music programs. Again, they are intended to celebrate  
16 the diverse communities of New York City and we often  
17 bring different cultures together on stage or in our  
18 gallery thanks to NEA funding. Some of those programs  
19 include our Global Mash-ups where we bring different  
20 cultures together with dance lessons and music. This  
21 coming week we have Japan meets Puerto Rico, we  
22 present a Brazil meets India, Taiwan meets Jamaica is  
23 coming up in a few weeks and these pairings are  
24 intended to bring people together in a very organic  
25 accessible fun way because even though we have, I

1  
2 don't know how many millions of people living in New  
3 York, nine million currently, it's really easy to get  
4 along if you don't talk to one another and so again  
5 these programs are intended to bring people together.  
6 NEA funding also helps to support our NEA Jazz  
7 Masters concerts. Last Friday night we had our NEA  
8 Jazz Masters presenting a dual piano concert with  
9 Toshiko Akiyoshi and Barry Harris both incredible  
10 musicians who are in their mid-80's and the NEA  
11 funding allows a small organization to bring the  
12 highest quality of arts programming into diverse  
13 communities that would not be possible otherwise.  
14 Also, NEA funding has a huge trickledown effect for a  
15 small organization like Flushing Town Hall they fund  
16 NYSCA, they fund Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, they  
17 fund Southern Exposure, all of which Flushing Town  
18 Hall receives funding from to the tune or around  
19 135,000 dollars in total. So again, the loss of a  
20 program such as the NEA and the trickledown effect  
21 would be absolutely devastating not only for our  
22 organization but for all the musicians that we hire,  
23 all the tech people that we hire, all the equipment  
24 that we rent, the... another trickledown effect that  
25 also impacts usually on the economy. So, in my office

1

2 I am proud to have a big bird feather, it is a real  
3 big bird feather and when I look at it, it reminds me  
4 of all the different arts funding that helped me to  
5 raise my children, helped me to raise my  
6 grandchildren and helps families across this country  
7 raise their kids with arts and culture in a very  
8 wonderful way. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, that  
10 is incredibly hard to do that off the cuff and come  
11 down pretty close to time, right, that was pretty  
12 good actually.

13 ELLEN KODADEK: And ending with big bird,  
14 you know... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...What's that?

16 ELLEN KODADEK: And ending with big bird.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah... no, I, I  
18 got to tell you... [cross-talk]

19 ELLEN KODADEK: ...Yeah, that was... [cross-  
20 talk... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...I wasn't...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 ELLEN KODADEK: ...that was good, right...  
24 [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that one I did  
not see coming... [cross-talk]

ELLEN KODADEK: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...did not see  
that one coming, that was great.

ELLEN KODADEK: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Next.

KAY TAKEDA: Hi, good afternoon, thank  
you so much for having me here today. My name is Kay  
Takeda, I'm the Vice President of Grants and Services  
for Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and really  
pleased to be here to provide testimony in support of  
this resolution. Considering the impact on federal...  
on the federal budget is minimal, the  
administration's position really threatens agencies  
that have a catalytic effect nationwide on our  
quality of life. My remarks this afternoon will focus  
on the NEA specifically which by virtue of its unique  
public position sets the national standard for public  
support to help the arts flourish in localities,  
states and regions alike. As I'm sure all of us are  
aware no other arts funder is committed to ensuring  
art support with an emphasis on arts education and  
underserved communities in every state. Many have

1  
2 noted that the agencies allocation of 40 percent of  
3 its annual budget to State arts agencies and regional  
4 arts organizations, leverages significant support  
5 along the way and requires planning processes that  
6 are inclusive and respond to local needs and diverse  
7 constituencies. A portion of that funding of course  
8 finds its way to hundreds of organizations right here  
9 in New York City through the New York State Council  
10 on the Arts from large museums and performing arts  
11 centers to individual teaching artists working in  
12 partnership with community based organizations which  
13 we have the great pleasure of supporting. Lower  
14 Manhattan Cultural Council has served as a re-grantor  
15 of state funds for the borough of Manhattan since  
16 1996 and we've carried out that work alongside of our  
17 re-granting work with city funding, the, the DCLA.  
18 With that support, we are able to make possible 80  
19 projects approximately annually with over 300,000  
20 dollars in state funding. Projects that bring rich  
21 arts experience to... experiences from Inwood to the  
22 Battery, all over Manhattan and we see firsthand the  
23 results of this kind of decentralization in local  
24 communities, making sure that independent grassroots  
25 arts activities can flourish and grow right alongside

1  
2 our world class institutions. The model that the NEA  
3 provides for how funds are disbursed by state  
4 agencies and regionals also really deserves note; an  
5 open application and peer review process in which  
6 juries of artist and arts professionals that  
7 represent diverse aesthetics, geographies and  
8 backgrounds are brought together to review proposals  
9 and make recommendations for support. This is a  
10 unique process that, when done right, goes a long way  
11 to ensuring that funds are allocated in a fair and  
12 equitable way and it's a unique feature of the  
13 American arts system. National leadership in this  
14 work creates a ripple effect in terms of dialogue and  
15 accountability in diversity, equity and inclusion and  
16 that's valuable for all of us. Speaking very  
17 personally for a moment I was very fortunate to have  
18 been trained in grant making and re-granting by the  
19 NEA and I can personally attest to how those values  
20 inform all of the work that I do today, the work that  
21 we do in LM... at LMCC to award these funds. Beyond our  
22 role as a re-grantor, LMCC has also been fortunate to  
23 receive NEA support that has helped us both to launch  
24 new programs and sustain critical resources. The  
25 NEA's support helps us provide work space and

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2 resources to over a hundred artists annually to  
3 support their creative development through our artist  
4 residency programs and that helps to keep New York  
5 City a place where art is not only consumed but made.  
6 The NEA has also provided essential seed funding for  
7 LMCC's Artist Summer Institute which was developed  
8 with creative capital in 2010 as a free five-day  
9 intensive professional development program for  
10 artists that has since served over 300 artists who  
11 credit the program as life changing in terms of how  
12 they approach their careers and the business side of  
13 their practice which is incredibly important here in  
14 the competitive environment and very expensive  
15 environment of New York City. Most recently LMCC has  
16 been proud to be the city's partner in administrating  
17 the SU-CASA Program for Manhattan artists working the  
18 senior centers which has been so generously expanded  
19 by the city council and as I'm sure you know was  
20 helped along by NEA Our Town funding. So that's seed  
21 support is seeing wonderful effects that continue  
22 today. The elimination of such an important agency  
23 would certainly impact LMCC and its constituents  
24 severely as well as the arts ecosystem in New York  
25 City as a whole. At the same time, we recognize that

1  
2 vibrancy of the arts in our city is vitally connected  
3 to the ability of artists to flourish in every part  
4 of the United States. Artists are drawn to New York  
5 from every corner of the country and beyond which  
6 illuminates how access to arts education and  
7 experience requires long term national investment.  
8 Historically we've seen the NEA has keep... helped keep  
9 state arts council's in place when budgetary concerns  
10 threaten their closure and while we are fortunate to  
11 live and work in New York City which has incredibly  
12 robust public and private sector support we know that  
13 in many other parts of the country this simply is not  
14 the case and so we applaud you, we applaud the city  
15 council for considering this measure and urge you to  
16 pass the resolution to stand with colleagues and  
17 fellow citizens, citizens nationally to support and  
18 preserve these essential resources. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
20 much and I gave you a little more time because I was  
21 president of Queens council and the arts so I'm a  
22 really, really big fan of arts councils... [cross-talk]

23 KAY TAKEDA: Great... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...but thank you  
25 for your testimony and...

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HANNAH JEW: Good afternoon, my name is Hannah Jew, I'm the Equity and Inclusion Coordinator at Dance/NYC and on behalf of Dance/NYC I'm here today to strongly endorse the proposed resolution and call upon president Trump to fully fund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities and not to eliminate or diminish any of these agencies in any form. We believe that New York City can very much take a lead in the national movement to protecting funding levels, ensure the continued flow of creativity and ideas and move the country forward. So today I'd like to share some key data on dance in New York City to make the case for discipline-specific funds, Dance/NYC's recent report, State of NYC Dance and Workforce Demographics from 2016, made possible in part but the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, offers some snapshot and trend analyses of federal funding to local dance groups with DataArts' Profiles. So, from a sample of 172 dance groups, these analyses showed that direct annual funding including significant National Endowment for the Arts funding, totals approximately

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1  
2 2.7 million dollars which was 21 percent of total  
3 government support. Federal support serves dance  
4 groups of all types studied, especially dance makers  
5 focused on creation and/or performance as well as  
6 educational organizations, presenting organizations  
7 and service organizations, including Dance/NYC.  
8 Federal funding serves organizations of all annual  
9 operating budget sizes and federal support also  
10 drives activity throughout New York City,  
11 particularly groups headquartered in Manhattan,  
12 Brooklyn, and the Bronx. While of considerable value,  
13 federal funding for a trend sample declined 37  
14 percent over a six-year period studied, signaling  
15 need for increased advocacy for discipline-specific  
16 funds. Funding declined for dance organizations of  
17 all types, with the exception of educational  
18 organizations and for organizations of all budget  
19 sizes as well. The smallest groups, those with  
20 budgets of less than 100,000 dollars for the year  
21 were hardest hit with a 69 percent decline in funding  
22 and these groups are also the most ethnically and  
23 racially diverse and the most likely to incorporate  
24 employed disabled New Yorkers in their team. Any  
25 further cuts to federal funding of the arts will have

1  
2 a grave impact on these groups that are already  
3 struggling and diminish the sector's capacity to  
4 deliver public value. Conversely, every dollar added  
5 would serve natural interests by driving economic and  
6 social impact for which there are clear benchmarks,  
7 from attendance and cultural tourism indicators to  
8 jobs and field expenditures. For example, the report  
9 sample generated 302 million dollars in annual  
10 expenditures, a healthy return on federal investment  
11 in these dance groups. So, in the... in making the case  
12 for dance, Dance/NYC joins the national service  
13 organization Dance/USA and the Performing Arts  
14 Alliance. We'd like to thank our partners and the New  
15 York City Council for their leadership.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,  
17 perfect timing. Are we not dancing enough in Queens  
18 is that what I should take from your testimony?

19 HANNAH JEW: I think we don't have a lot  
20 of representation and interaction with groups in  
21 Queens and you know this report really does highlight  
22 how everything is just concentrated in Manhattan...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right... [cross-  
25 talk]

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2 HANNAH JEW: ...which is not a surprise and  
3 Brooklyn and there's not a lot of community  
4 engagement happening in the outer boroughs... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...Right. Well  
7 there are a lot of folks who dance in Queens  
8 including myself so... [cross-talk]

9 HANNAH JEW: ...absolutely... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...I think we've  
11 got to fix that and, and make sure that our, our  
12 Queens groups are getting more federal funding for  
13 sure.

14 HANNAH JEW: Of course.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And if they were  
16 closer with Dance/NYC of course we love Blain and,  
17 and we love your organization and... [cross-talk]

18 HANNAH JEW: ...thank you... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...we just have to  
20 bring it all back together again because trust me  
21 they're dancing in Queens even if they're not...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 HANNAH JEW: ...no... yes... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...if they're not  
25 recognized. So, thank you and... [cross-talk]

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HANNAH JEW: ...thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...next.

ANTONIO PONTON-NUNEZ: So my name is Antonio and I'm with Humanities New York and I want to thank the City Council for offering to make this resolution and hearing our testimony. I also want to thank the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs for funding us for the past four years. The mission of Humanities New York is to provide leadership and support across the state's intellectual and cultural sectors through grants, programs, networking, and advocacy in order to encourage critical thinking and cultural understanding in the public arena. We were founded in 1975 and Humanities New York is the sole statewide partner of the National Endowment of the Humanities in this state of course and we're also the sole statewide proponent of public access to the humanities in New York. Our vision is to create a vibrant, growing, public humanities community that engages all New Yorkers in civic participation, volunteerism, philanthropy, and community involvement. Humanities New York partners with libraries, schools, museums, and community

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2 organizations across the state to benefit more than  
3 one million New Yorkers annually. The National  
4 Endowment for the Humanities has a significant  
5 investment in New York City for over the past 50  
6 years, with memorable and groundbreaking projects to  
7 its credit such as the Met's 1972 exhibition of King  
8 Tutankhamen and nearly all Ken Burn's Films; more  
9 recently, the Frieda Kahlo exhibition at the New York  
10 Botanical Gardens has received critical acclaim and  
11 record visitation. More quietly perhaps, the NEH is  
12 responsible for funding primary research, smaller  
13 scale exhibitions such as the Staten Island Museum,  
14 teacher trainings, and deeply impactful Challenge  
15 Grants for organizations to do bricks-and-mortar  
16 projects or raise an endowment. All its grants are  
17 highly competitive and New York City institutions are  
18 a good match for NEH guidelines. In fiscal year 2016,  
19 the NEH invested more than 11 million in New York  
20 City through this and other funding lines. For its  
21 part, Humanities New York invested a significant  
22 portion of its state and federal funding in projects  
23 across the five boroughs as well, serving a different  
24 slice of the cultural ecosystem. On average, about 40  
25 percent of our resources go to the city, which over

1  
2 the past two years has amounted to over 673,000  
3 dollars. In addition, we have invested over 200,000  
4 dollars in the celebration statewide of the New York  
5 State Suffrage Centennial. The high standards that  
6 the NEH holds to all its grantees means that all  
7 museum interpretation is state of the art, cultural  
8 presenters' education curricula are robust and  
9 accurate, new discoveries are made in primary  
10 research, and collections are digitized and preserved  
11 for the coming generations. There are those,  
12 including the Heritage Foundation and the some in the  
13 incoming presidential administration, who have stated  
14 that the endowments are best turned over to private  
15 funders. But that is a cop-out, literally, passing  
16 the buck. While the largest institutions can survive,  
17 and thrive in that environment, many smaller,  
18 community based organizations certainly cannot. And  
19 the field may be too big and needful for private  
20 foundations and individuals to simply pick up the  
21 pieces. Finally, there is a moral merit to preserving  
22 Federal agencies that demonstrate leadership on  
23 behalf of the Federal Government, and answer to all  
24 Congressional districts. Corporations and Foundations  
25 tend to have distinct regional interests and funding

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2 limitations; without the imperative from the cultural  
3 endowments to serve Congressman Dan Donovan's  
4 district of Staten Island as well as Congressman  
5 Jerrold Nadler's districts in Manhattan. Certain  
6 urban and rural districts are going to be left out,  
7 and inequality will be exacerbated by the lack of  
8 access to cultural opportunities nationwide.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you...

10 [cross-talk]

11 ANTONIO PONTON-NINUZ: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I, I, I read the  
13 final page of your testimony so it is very much noted  
14 and I appreciate that but we're going to.. in the  
15 interest of time hear from some other folks but I  
16 will say because the New York Botanical Garden is  
17 here, the Frieda Kahlo exhibition was amazing and I  
18 had just been to Mexico City when I saw that so it  
19 was extra special. So, thank you all for being here,  
20 for participating in our rally and, and being huge  
21 supporters. Next we will hear from Aaron Bouska,  
22 Jennifer, I think it's Kenka, Jennifer from the  
23 Academy of American Poets here, did I get that right?  
24 Its Benka, I couldn't be more wrong, thank you.  
25 Justine Nagan, is Justine Nagan still here, she is

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and Allie Carierii, did I get that right? Close enough, I have a name that people butcher all the time so I've said close enough a lot. Alright, Aaron why don't you go first.

AARON BOUSKA: Thank you majority leader. I am Aaron Bouska, Vice President of Government and Community Relations at the New York Botanical Garden and I'd like to thank you for your leadership today and your members for a wonderful rally, that was a lot of fun and hopefully sent a strong message. As... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Did, did Gregory enjoy it, that's what... [cross-talk]

AARON BOUSKA: ...he did, yes.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good, good.

AARON BOUSKA: Indeed, I think he's in the civil disobedience part now, majority... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We'll be doing a training at my office, this is serious, we're actually going to do a civil disobedience training and I just... make sure you relay I'll be disappointed if Gregory doesn't participate.

AARON BOUSKA: Okay.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

AARON BOUSKA: As an international science and cultural institution serving people from around the corner and across the globe, we at NYBG are particularly disturbed by the proposed elimination of the NEA, NEH, IMLS, and Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Broadcasting but we are equally alarmed by the proposed double digit reductions to the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institution of Health as well as well as Environmental Programs in the Department of Energy. Funding for climate research, alternative energy and conservation are key to sustaining the worlds delicate ecosystem and ultimately the health and well-being of both plants and people. Having said that federal support for the Arts and Humanities to our Bronx community is perhaps best illustrated through NYBG's most successful exhibition ever; Frieda Kahlo; Art, Garden, Life. The exhibition receives support through NEA, NEH, and IMLS and would not have been possible without these funding sources. This major exhibition integrated art and horticulture components to reveal Kahlo's interest in Mexican's natural history and plant life, expressed.. as

1  
2 expressed in her home garden and botanical imagery in  
3 her paintings. With more than 525,000 visitors,  
4 Frieda Kahlo broke all previous exhibition attendance  
5 records and this exhibition transcended its  
6 scholastic value. For one, the exhibition's subject,  
7 cultural programming and bilingual interpretation  
8 helped NYBG connect meaningfully with the Bronx's  
9 majority Hispanic community. We also collaborated  
10 with many local arts groups on programming and most  
11 notably that I'd like to point out to the Chairman,  
12 it's a little-known program of the NEA that minimizes  
13 the cost of insuring arts exhibitions through  
14 indemnity agreements backed by the federal  
15 government. The insurance valuation for shows like  
16 Freida Kahlo were enormous with premiums way beyond  
17 the reach of even the largest cultural institutions.  
18 Without this federal program, world class art would  
19 not have been possible in the Bronx or many other  
20 parts of the country for that matter. In conclusion,  
21 we at NYBG believe the real strength of all the arts  
22 and cultural endowments is that they are distributed  
23 throughout the United States, reaching every  
24 Congressional District, rich and poor, urban and  
25 rural. I know that our New York Delegation will stand

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2 up to these serious and catastrophic proposed,  
3 proposed cuts and reductions. In addition to passing  
4 resolution 1393, which we wholly endorse and thank  
5 the council for just passing, I encourage the city  
6 council to also leverage our vast networks to reach  
7 out to friends, family, and colleagues in other parts  
8 of the United States and to get them fired up about  
9 this issue, have them call the representatives and  
10 tell their stories. NYBG will be doing this with our  
11 sister botanical gardens and science institutions  
12 nationwide and we need everyone in the room to do the  
13 same. Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
15 much, well timed because I think these cards are here  
16 from one of your organizations, right, there you go.  
17 So, we'll talk about that when we get to you, next.

18 JENNIFER BENKA: Thank you for this  
19 opportunity to speak before you this afternoon and  
20 for your leadership and support of funding for the  
21 Arts and Humanities. I'm Jennifer Benka, the  
22 Executive Director of the Academy of American Poets  
23 which was founded in New York City in 1934. We are  
24 the largest poetry organization in the city and also  
25 the nation's largest membership based advocate for

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2 poets in the art of poetry. New York City is our  
3 nations poetry capital, we are the city where Whitman  
4 walked, where Emma Lazarus left her lines welcoming  
5 immigrants to our shores, the home of the Harlem  
6 Renaissance, and the spoken work and Hip Hop  
7 revolution. More working poets live in our city than  
8 any other and we have more nonprofit literary  
9 organizations and presses than any other working to  
10 support those poets by employing them, publishing  
11 them, featuring them in readings, and sharing their  
12 work on digital channels. Not only do our  
13 organizations ensure that New York City's literary  
14 reputation remains, we reach thousands of residents  
15 and tourists with literary events each year and close  
16 to a million city residents online. Poetry is an  
17 efficient and inexpensive art to produce and share.  
18 With very little investment, we provide an arts  
19 experience for an incredibly wide audience. On our  
20 website Poets dot org, we maintain one of the world's  
21 most popular collections of poems and last year  
22 982,000 New Yorkers visited the site to read poems.  
23 Including 30,676 who read Maya Angelou's "Still I  
24 Rise" and 22,391 who read Langston Hughes's "Let  
25 America Be America Again." Both poems that speak to

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2 our present moment in profound ways. We celebrate  
3 National Poetry Month each April with a number of  
4 programs including a large event at Lincoln Center  
5 called Poetry and the Creative Mind. We provide  
6 numerous free resources for New York City school  
7 teachers so that they might share poetry with their  
8 students and all of these programs; Poets dot org,  
9 National Poetry Month, our many readings and our  
10 educator resources are all made possible by the  
11 National Endowment for the Arts and the National  
12 Endowment for the Humanities. Together these agencies  
13 contribute 75,000 to 100,000 dollars to our annual  
14 budget. Without this funding, many of our wide  
15 reaching and impactful efforts will be jeopardized.  
16 Poets have few opportunities for support, NEA  
17 fellowships are critical to sustaining this art form,  
18 poetry matters. The Arts and Humanities encourage  
19 reflection, empathy and imagination; all qualities  
20 necessary to our individual and collective success.  
21 The National Endowment for the Arts and the National  
22 Endowment for the Humanities support invaluable  
23 services to New York City residents. The Academy of  
24 American Poets expresses our strongest possible  
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support for continued federal funding for the arts  
and humanities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
much and under time. Are the Maya Angelou and  
Langston Hughes poems, how do they rank in terms of  
what folks are searching, is that... [cross-talk]

JENNIFER BENKA: ...they're... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...one and two?

JENNIFER BENKA: ...they're in our top  
five... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...okay... [cross-  
talk]

JENNIFER BENKA: ...and have been since the  
election.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: What's number  
one?

JENNIFER BENKA: Death be not Proud.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Very  
interesting. Thank you for the work that you do  
obviously, I'm a big fan of poetry and, and really,  
really grateful that you're here.

JENNIFER BENKA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you...  
[cross-talk]

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JENNIFER BENKA: ...for the opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Next.

JUSTINE NAGAN: Thank you, I'm Justine Nagan, Executive Director of American Documentary Incorporated, a nonprofit based in Brooklyn, and Executive Producer for its two signature television series; POV on PBS, and America Reframed on the World Channel. When the public broadcasting act was put in place in 1967, one of its core tenets read: "It is in the public interest to encourage the development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences..." This is what we do every day, we do it with the help of a dedicated staff and board, partners across the nation, and with public and private support. We feel it is crucial that American viewers, regardless of their ability to pay for cable or high speed internet, should have the ability to access top quality documentaries that will engage, inform, and entertain them. Half of our budget each year comes from PBS as a licensing fee for POV and half of that goes directly to filmmakers for the right to broadcast their films on television for free, stream them online and include them in our

1  
2 national lending library for the period of the  
3 license. Our Lending library is a network of over  
4 10,000 community partners in 48 states. Nationally  
5 these partners include places like the Community  
6 College in Hibbing, Minnesota to North Kohala Public  
7 Library in Kapaau, Hawaii. Locally those partners  
8 include the Lineage Project at the Horizon Juvenile  
9 Center in the Bronx and the El Barrio Community Media  
10 Center in Manhattan. These are organizations with  
11 little or no budget to include this type of content  
12 in their programming and it is content that they feel  
13 is essential to serving their local communities.  
14 Annually we don't receive funds directly from CPB,  
15 but many of our core partners do. These include ITVS,  
16 the national minority consortia and public media  
17 stations around the country. These partners are  
18 essential in keeping our public media community and  
19 content vibrant and diverse in the broadest sense of  
20 the word. When we do receive CPB funds, it's to  
21 strategically support a particular project, like last  
22 year when we released All the Difference, which  
23 followed two African American men in Chicago from  
24 high school graduation through college graduation,  
25 showing the immense community investment it took for

1  
2 those young men to reach their potential and why it  
3 was worth the effort. For this film, CPB supported  
4 two years of engagement activities around first  
5 generation college students and young men of color on  
6 the path to college completion. The conversations  
7 after screenings, from Alabama to Los Angeles, were  
8 heartbreaking and inspiring. After viewing the film,  
9 64 percent of students were compelled to take to take  
10 more responsibility for their education and 74  
11 percent of teachers said that they plan to learn how  
12 they can support first generation college students.  
13 The film also played at a special White House  
14 screening as part of the Brothers' Keeper initiative.  
15 None of it would have been... none of it would have  
16 happened without CPB's support. We receive NEA, NYSCA  
17 and DCA funds too. While these grants do not make up  
18 large percentages of our budget, every dollar is  
19 needed strategically to support diverse filmmakers  
20 creating powerful documentaries and then to ensure  
21 that that work reaches audiences that are hungry for  
22 it. It is also important to note that these films are  
23 collaborative works, when we support a film, these  
24 dollars go to help pay hundreds of people; directors  
25 and producers, yes but also camera people, sound

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recorders, composers, editors, taxi drivers,  
baristas, you get the idea. The field is large and  
productive and much of our industry is based in New  
York. we appreciate the opportunity to speak today  
about the proposed cuts and the potential impact to  
our work, our community and the film economy of New  
York. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, I  
just want to say thank you as someone who really,  
really tries to watch every POV on... thank you, you,  
you... we've never met before but that is some of my  
favorite stuff to ever see and... [cross-talk]

JUSTINE NAGAN: ...Thank you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...I'm also  
married to documentary filmmaker, my husband wrote  
and produced "Saving Jamaica Bay" ... [cross-talk]

JUSTINE NAGAN: Oh wow... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...which aired on  
PBS... [cross-talk]

JUSTINE NAGAN: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...last month and  
went through the, the, the film, you know festival  
circuit last year and I got to do all that with him

1  
2 so it was great. So really, really appreciate  
3 everything that you do.

4 JUSTINE NAGAN: Thanks so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And probably the  
6 most heartbreaking thing that I heard today is you  
7 talking about the film that played at a special White  
8 House screening and wondering if movies like this  
9 will play in this White House over the next several  
10 years. So, thank you for that, last but not least on  
11 this panel.

12 ALLIE CARRIERI: Thank you very much  
13 majority leader for your leadership in supporting the  
14 arts and cultural community in New York City. My name  
15 is Allie Carrieri and I'm here on behalf of Roundabout  
16 Theatre Company, New York's largest non-for profit  
17 theatre to testify in support of the resolution and  
18 the continuation of the National Endowment for the  
19 Arts. As a non-for profit, Roundabout is committed to  
20 producing the highest quality theatre with the finest  
21 artists, sharing stories that endure, and providing  
22 accessibility to all audiences through the production  
23 of classic plays and musicals; development and, and  
24 production of new works by established and emerging  
25 writers; educational initiatives that enrich the

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2 lives of children and adults; and a subscription  
3 model and audience outreach programs that cultivate  
4 and engages all audiences. The NEA has been critical  
5 to our efforts to achieve that mission both directly  
6 and indirectly for the past 50 years. Perhaps it is  
7 no coincidence that the year in which the nonprofit  
8 theatre movement, including Roundabout, was born was  
9 1965, the same year the NEA was established.  
10 Roundabout is committed to creating and sustaining  
11 the artists of yesterday, today and tomorrow. We  
12 produce nine productions a year on our five stages in  
13 the theatre district including three Broadway  
14 theatres, one off Broadway, and black box theatre. In  
15 addition to serving more than one million audience  
16 members and employing 1,400 artists, technicians, and  
17 theatre and administrative staff. We provide arts  
18 education services improving teacher practice and  
19 student achievement for 35,000 New York City public  
20 school teachers and students from all five boroughs.  
21 Of great pride is our just launched Theatrical  
22 Workforce Development Program, the first of its kind  
23 in the country in partnership with IATSE which will  
24 create a pathway for out of work 18 to 24, 24-year-  
25 old young adults into middle class middle skill jobs

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2 in technical theatre. Roundabout has received NEA  
3 funding on and off for a decade; most recently we  
4 were awarded a grant in support of our production of  
5 Napoli Brook... Napoli, Brooklyn by playwright Meghan  
6 Kennedy this season. But beyond the direct support  
7 from the NEA, Roundabout recognizes the immense value  
8 of the agency as a lifeline for smaller non-for  
9 profit theatres in both rural and urban areas around  
10 the country. This is why Roundabout has launched,  
11 launched its "I Heart Arts campaign" to allow for  
12 audiences, artists, and colleagues around the country  
13 to vocalize their support for the National Endowment  
14 for the Arts. As a nation that believes in its  
15 culture on a fundamental level is the nation in which  
16 we are proud to create theatre, the education  
17 programs and the inspiration to pursue the arts. In  
18 our theatres beginning last week, attendees at The  
19 Price, If I Forget and On the Exhale will find a pre-  
20 addressed postcard in their Playbills. All they have  
21 to do is sign them and drop them in the display boxes  
22 in the theatre lobbies and Roundabout will stamp and  
23 mail them to Senator Charles Schumer on their behalf,  
24 encouraging him to continue his advocacy for the NEA.  
25 Online, we are posting social cards that fans,

1  
2 followers and other members of the Roundabout family  
3 can share to help spread a word... spread the word  
4 about their own support for the NEA. As an  
5 organization that provides a place for artists to act  
6 and express themselves, we are pleased to be able to  
7 provide that exact same opportunity to audiences so  
8 they may share the... that the arts are important to  
9 them as Americans. We are keeping track of the number  
10 of postcards completed and the feedback from these  
11 postcards and we will share the data with the council  
12 and the Department of Cultural Affairs in the hope  
13 that it will bolster, bolster their efforts to  
14 demonstrate the importance of NEA funding not just  
15 for New York cultural institutions, but for  
16 individuals whose lives have been impacted by the  
17 arts both personally and professionally. Thank you  
18 again, for this... for leading this change on behalf of  
19 New Yorkers.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you and I  
21 just signed my postcard.

22 ALLIE CARIERI: Thank you, I have more...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, if I give  
25 this to you, you will mail this to Chuck Schumer,

1  
2 that is awesome. So, thank you, I really, really love  
3 this and, and I really did just sign it myself and,  
4 and hopefully Chuck Schumer will read it himself and  
5 see that sunny side New York supports the arts and,  
6 and I will. I think it's great, I really love these  
7 kinds of campaigns and I love when nonprofit  
8 organizations do the work and, and fight for  
9 themselves and for others. So, that's brilliant and I  
10 really will give this to you. So, thank you very,  
11 very much and now we have one last panel; David  
12 Mutton I believe, Dr. Rachel Feinmark and Judy Kuhn.  
13 We have more for you, I think Chloe signed it as  
14 well, thank you. Who would like to go first, you got  
15 it.

16 JUDY KUHN: Good afternoon, my name is  
17 Judy Kuhn, I'm a full time professional actor, singer  
18 and teaching artist and a four time Tony Award  
19 nominee and I am here today representing the Vineyard  
20 Theatre where I have worked as an actor and have been  
21 honored to serve on the Board of Directors for the  
22 last 15 years and also, I'm here as a proud member of  
23 the Stage Actors Union, Actors Equity Association. I  
24 want to talk about the importance of the National  
25 Endowment for the Arts in my own life and career, in

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1  
2 my community and all the people who are lovers of the  
3 arts. I've worked as an actor on two productions at  
4 the Vineyard, both were original musicals and both  
5 were made possible through funding from the NEA. It  
6 was during the first of these shows that my long and  
7 happy relationship with the Vineyard began as well as  
8 my abiding admiration for the work this company does.  
9 Since 1985 the Vineyard has been granted over one  
10 million dollars by the NEA for nearly 50 projects.  
11 This support has been instrumental in making the  
12 company one of Americas preeminent centers for the  
13 creation of new plays and musicals, financing works  
14 like Kander and Ebb's the Scottsboro boys, which was  
15 nominated for 12 Tony Awards and went on to a  
16 national tour. The play, Gloria by Brandon Jacobs-  
17 Jenkins, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize  
18 and enjoyed a critically acclaimed continued life in  
19 Chicago when it transferred to the Goodman Theatre  
20 earlier this year and incidentally Brandon was  
21 awarded a MacArthur Fellowship this past year. The  
22 NEA has supported the work and creative development  
23 of other great artists at the Vineyard such as two  
24 time Pulitzer Prize finalist Gina Gionfriddo,  
25 Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, Paula Vogel whose

1  
2 play in decent... produced by the Vineyard last year is  
3 about to open on Broadway as well as Playwrights  
4 Nicky Silver, Jenny Schwartz, Kenneth Lonergan, actor  
5 and playwright Colman Domingo, writer director Tina  
6 Landau, composers John Kander, Ricky Ian Gordon,  
7 Kirsten Childs, Polly Pen and many, many others. But  
8 then there's also jobs and the economy and often when  
9 politicians talk about the arts they try to make it  
10 sound like a luxury, something superfluous, enjoyed  
11 by a few. At the Vineyard alone our grants from the  
12 NEA put roughly 50 artists, craftsman,  
13 administrators, teachers, and technicians to work  
14 each year on projects that help us and our audience  
15 understand our path, define our present, and envision  
16 our future. Beyond its doors, the Vineyard has made a  
17 huge impact on our neighborhood, Union Square,  
18 helping to make it a destination for tourism,  
19 bringing business to restaurants and retail stores in  
20 the area. Nationally the arts contribute to over 700  
21 billion to the U.S. economy producing a greater  
22 percentage of our gross domestic product than  
23 industries like construction or utilities. In recent  
24 years, the growth of culture related industries has  
25 outpaced other sectors of our economy including food

1  
2 services, retail trade, and transportation. The arts  
3 and thus the NEA is a job creator and a driver of  
4 local economies. In addition to this and the more  
5 than 20,000 theatre goers that patronized the  
6 Vineyards work over 600 students at local public high  
7 schools are the direct beneficiaries of our NEA  
8 funding where Vineyard plays and teaching artists  
9 make up an important part of the curriculum. Arts  
10 education and programming teaches skills that are  
11 important for everyone and are essential to a  
12 Democratic society. The NEA supports many hundreds of  
13 institutions like the Vineyard in every community  
14 around the country and for many groups the Vineyard  
15 included, NEA grants are among the largest single  
16 source of funding they get, it is the backbone of the  
17 cultural life throughout the U.S. and absolutely  
18 essential to sustaining the quality of life,  
19 education and innovation nationwide. I thank you for  
20 this resolution and for supporting the arts and I  
21 implore congress and the president to grow our  
22 government's investment and the country's creativity  
23 by continuing to fully fund the NEA, thank you very  
24 much.  
25

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you and I  
just want to assure you that not every politician  
talks about... [cross-talk]

JUDY KUHN: I, I mean... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...in, in... [cross-  
talk]

JUDY KUHN: ...the... yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...the way...  
[cross-talk]

JUDY KUHN: ...I should have clarified...  
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...no, no... [cross-  
talk]

JUDY KUHN: ...so if you want to get rid  
of... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...it was... [cross-  
talk]

JUDY KUHN: ...government funding for the  
arts... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...perfectly clear  
what you were trying to... I did not take offense but  
I'm, I'm proud to be one of those politicians who  
does get this... [cross-talk]

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JUDY KUHN: ...and your support... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...and support the arts... [cross-talk]

JUDY KUHN: ...is so valued and appreciated... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...thank you and I hope you were at our rally earlier, I don't know if you were... [cross-talk]

JUDY KUHN: I was at your rally... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, it was pretty cool... [cross-talk]

JUDY KUHN: I was standing behind you cheering... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you... [cross-talk]

JUDY KUHN: ...cheering you on... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...Thank you, it was great. Dr. Feinmark.

RACHEL FEINMARK: Good afternoon, I am Rachel Feinmark. I'm here today on behalf of the Lower Eastside Tenement Museum. I first want to take a moment to thank the council for inviting us here

1  
2 today and for their really unwavering support of the  
3 Tenement Museum over the past 28 years. I'm proud to  
4 speak in support of this resolution which I think is  
5 just further proof that New Yorkers and our  
6 representatives understand the key role that  
7 humanities play in bringing empathy and beauty to the  
8 world and in ensuring our democratic future. The  
9 Lower Eastside Tenement Museum tells the stories of  
10 immigrants who followed their dreams to this, this  
11 city, building lives in often difficult  
12 circumstances, finding work, raising families,  
13 educating their children and through the hard work of  
14 establishing themselves in a new place building this  
15 country. It's through these very real stories of the  
16 generations who lived in Orchard Street tenements  
17 that the Museum helps visitors understand how  
18 Americans have developed as a people. Our 250,000  
19 annual visitors who come from across the city and  
20 around the world learn how Americans have drawn from  
21 our past to chart our nations future. They come to  
22 realize there have moments in our natural... in our  
23 national history when too many Americans have lost  
24 confidence in our future and lashed out with  
25 hostility against immigrants in reaction. Sadly,

1  
2 we're in such a period right now. Sadly, as well, in  
3 this time of national crisis there are few non-  
4 partisan institutions guide us. We're deeply divided  
5 over every possible political question and we can't  
6 even agree on what made us the people we are, we can  
7 barely on facts and we consume information only if it  
8 reinforces our prejudices. It's against this backdrop  
9 that museums have taken on an ever more important  
10 roles. Surveys show museums remain unequivocally  
11 trusted source. Museums do incredibly important work,  
12 they're one of the last neutral venues for our key  
13 civic discussions, they draw on authentic narratives  
14 of real people to enable informed and reasoned public  
15 debate. Museums help us sort out historical fact from  
16 partisan fiction and play a very crucial role in the  
17 democratic landscape. These museums look to  
18 government funding to fill in the gaps from private  
19 funds. For the Tenement Museum, federal funding  
20 accounts for less than 10 percent of our capital and  
21 operating budgets. But that federal support  
22 stimulates private giving through matching grant  
23 challenges. That federal support allows us to take  
24 risks to develop innovative programming. That federal  
25 support has allowed us to create new jobs and drive

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2 local tourism. The National Endowment for the  
3 Humanities has made over one million in grants to  
4 support the Tenement Museum's new Under One Roof  
5 exhibit which will open in July 2017. That exhibit  
6 will in turn support 20 new staff positions and allow  
7 the museum to welcome an additional 50,000 visitors  
8 to Lower Eastside each year visitors who will spend  
9 their time patronizing local restaurants, shops and  
10 galleries. But this return on investment goes beyond  
11 a simple balance sheet. Under One Roof will feature a  
12 reconstructed apartment presenting the stories of  
13 Latino, Chinese and Holocaust surviving families who  
14 lived there in the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
15 century. The exhibit will explore the Lower East Side  
16 as a center of the city's diversity and weave  
17 together narratives of immigrants' early struggles  
18 with their children's successes. Thanks to NEH  
19 funding, visitors will be able to use innovative  
20 technology to experience a recreated sweatshop from  
21 the 1970's, to listen to the music that made first  
22 generation American children feel like they truly  
23 belonged and ultimately to put a face on the huddled  
24 masses yearning for a new start on America's shores  
25 all in a space that is open for debate, open for

1  
2 questions and open for democratic dialogue. Thanks to  
3 federal funding for arts and culture the Tenement  
4 Museum is able to play a crucial role in preserving  
5 American democracy. The 228,000 visitors who come to  
6 Tenement Museum each year including 55,000 school  
7 children, 500 teachers engaging in professional  
8 development workshops and over 1.2 million visitors  
9 to our website and virtual tours do more than just  
10 marvel at historic apartments, they come to  
11 understand the profound role that immigration has  
12 played and continues to play in shaping America's  
13 evolving national identity. They imagine what it was  
14 like to live side by side with other with others who  
15 spoke different languages and held different beliefs.  
16 They think about the ways that the actions of  
17 individuals shape and are shaped by American culture  
18 and law and they begin to see that our open society,  
19 democratic institutions, cultural creativity, and  
20 economic vitality are only possible because of our  
21 experience as a nation of immigrants and that's what  
22 makes America great. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, you  
24 ended so optimistically.

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RACHEL FEINMARK: I hope we can continue to feel optimistic.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Very impressive also you're one of the fastest readers I have ever encountered in these hearings as you see that clock going down you were just really firing away, I almost wanted it to go off so you would actually slow down and like... my blood pressure was starting to go up a little, no it's great, it was great and very impressive, half a million dollar grant from IMLS... [cross-talk]

RACHEL FEINMARK: ...uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...I... [cross-talk]

RACHEL FEINMARK: ...yeah, it was national leadership grant.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, that's amazing. Having worked in the public libraries before I got elected, you know I have this... [cross-talk]

RACHEL FEINMARK: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...great love affair with the arts and libraries and... [cross-talk]

RACHEL FEINMARK: ...yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that IMLS is a great agency as long as it exists, it's a great

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agency. Thank you very much. Last but certainly not  
least on this day of cultural advocacy...

DAVID MUTTON: Not least, hopefully.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes.

DAVID MUTTON: My name is David Mutton,  
I'm speaking on behalf of the Moth. The Moth is an  
acclaimed not-for profit organization that seeks to  
honor the, the diversity and commonality of human  
experience through the arts and craft of  
storytelling. We produce live storytelling shows  
where folks can share their first person true  
stories. We also run educational programming  
throughout New York City and community programming  
for underserved adults through the city too as well  
as a public radio show and a podcast which last year  
was downloaded 44 million times. This year we are  
producing more than 550 shows, live shows throughout  
New York and the country and indeed throughout the  
world. The Moth has been the proud recipient of  
funding from the NEA since 2008 and we receive  
funding from the corporation for Public Broadcasting  
from 2010 through 2014. Support from the CPB was  
transformational for the Moth, with CPB funding we

1  
2 piloted a public radio show featuring stories from  
3 our live shows and developed it into a weekly  
4 offering. Thanks to this initial funding Moth Radio  
5 Hour now adds on more than 450 public radio stations  
6 including WNYC and is enjoyed by about one million  
7 people every week. The NEA provides essential support  
8 for our radio show and also our curated and directed  
9 Mainstage series. With NEA funds, we're able to keep  
10 ticket prices affordable and also bring the series to  
11 cities where, where we would otherwise not be able to  
12 do it through financial reasons such as El Paso and  
13 Baltimore. The Moth's core belief is that everyone  
14 has a story and by crafting and telling our own  
15 stories and hearing the true personal stories of  
16 others we can see one another in our full, storied  
17 complexity and enjoy our shared humanity. The NEA  
18 makes it possible for The Moth to find distinctive  
19 voices and to share them with new audiences while the  
20 CPB made it possible for us to share these stories  
21 with a broad and diverse national audience. Thank you  
22 for this opportunity and thank you and all your  
23 colleagues for your support of the arts.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
25 much, I appreciate that and all of your support. So,

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2 I want to thank all of you for being here for  
3 testifying and celebrating with us. As you can see  
4 the committee voted unanimously, nine to nothing in  
5 favor of this resolution so now it goes to the full  
6 city council, the 51 member city council on Wednesday  
7 and let's just say I'm optimist that we will pass it,  
8 I hope unanimously, we'll have to check with a few of  
9 our colleagues but it'll be widely, widely supported  
10 by this council which believes very much in, in  
11 culture and arts, the humanities, the corporation for  
12 public broadcasting and all of the good things that  
13 you represent so with that thank you all very much  
14 and this hearing is adjourned.

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[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

April 18, 2017