



February 13, 2018

The Honorable Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As the president of the Association of Art Museum Directors and the director of the Oakland Museum of California, I was deeply distressed to learn that your Administration's proposed budget calls for the defunding and "orderly shutdown" of the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute of Museum and Library Services. Distressed—and concerned that perhaps you are unaware of how the funding these three agencies provide helps people in our communities in tangible ways.

Our organizations provide arts education for kids that—repeated studies have shown—helps them do better in school. And these are not just for public or private school groups, but for homeschool families, too. We run programs that can help professionals from police officers to doctors improve their skills in investigating detail. We provide classes that help adults and children with disabilities, or those struggling with diseases like Alzheimer's, as well as their families. And between us we employ thousands of people on both a full- and a part-time basis, playing an important role in our local economies and our communities.

Funding from the NEA, NEH, and IMLS are all crucial to this work. Not because these Federal funds pay for all these programs—they don't even come close. But for museums like ours, these funds validate our work and help us attract private support. In fact, each dollar awarded by the NEA attracts nine dollars from other sources, and the ratio is similar for the other organizations. This dynamic is also true for the theaters, and libraries, and myriad other organizations that rely on NEA, NEH, and IMLS support to service their communities as best they can. In effect, these agencies act like incubators working in the private sector, seeking out and analyzing opportunities and making targeted investments.

Whether one is a Republican or a Democrat, we can all agree that there are many things in government that need fixing. But these three Federal agencies aren't broken. They run effectively and efficiently, accomplishing an incredible amount in a wide range of states and communities. And they do it with 0.012% of the Federal budget.

I hope you will reconsider your decision, and keep in mind how many jobs and families depend on it.

Sincerely,

Lori Fogarty
President, Association of Art Museum Directors
Director and CEO, Oakland Museum of California