

May 4, 2009

Honorable Dom Costa
PA State Representative, District 21
1808 Chislett St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Dear Representative Costa,

I am writing to you on behalf of Pittsburgh Glass Center and the community we serve to urge you to support the proposed \$14 million budget for Grants to the Arts for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) and to oppose any bill that eliminates this funding.

In an economy where corporate and individual support is declining quickly, Pennsylvania's arts organization cannot afford to lose any other support. Before the economic downturn, there were 6,837 full-time equivalent jobs in the arts in Allegheny County alone. A significant number of those jobs have already been cut. Without PCA funding many, many more will be lost.

Through its innovative re-granting program, Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts, the PCA works with 17 organizations to provide grants of state funds to a wide variety of local and community arts activities. Funding through the PCA enables arts and culture organizations to bring the arts to citizens throughout Pennsylvania, improving their quality of life. Many of these projects reach under-served communities and engage people who would otherwise not have access to artistic opportunities and experiences.

For years, Pennsylvania has lagged far behind neighbor states in per capita support for the arts, including Maryland, New York, and New Jersey, but also West Virginia. By supporting the proposed \$14 million budget for Grants to the Arts you'll be making a powerful statement about the value of the arts in our commonwealth. Please help us continue to provide services to our fellow Pennsylvanians and bring the jobs, local spending, pride, and vitality to our communities that comes from an investment in the arts.

In closing, I would like to again urge you to support the proposed \$14 million budget for Grants to the Arts for the PCA so that the organizations and jobs that this funding supports can continue to offer valuable artistic experiences to Pennsylvania citizens. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather McElwee