

21st March 2017

The Honorable Cory A. Booker  
United States Senate  
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Booker,

As directors of New Jersey's largest art museums, we write today to request your support for sufficient funding in the FY2018 federal budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). These agencies—proposed for elimination in President Trump's budget plan—provide seed funding and advocacy that is vital to the health of our cultural institutions, our communities, our state, and our nation. We are most grateful for your past support of the arts and humanities and ask for your redoubled efforts in the present crisis.

More than five decades ago, our country's leaders, in a bipartisan fashion, created the NEA and NEH, recognizing as they did the "high place accorded by the American people to the nation's rich cultural heritage." The establishing legislation stated that the arts and humanities foster "mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of persons and groups," and are thus "vital to democracy" and an "essential" recipient of federal support.

As you weigh spending priorities, please consider the impact of the NEA, NEH, and IMLS:

- In 2016 funding for the NEA and NEH amounted to just 0.003% of all federal spending, with each receiving approximately \$148 million. Taxpayers' return on these investments was substantial—on average, each dollar awarded to an arts organization by the NEA leveraged nine dollars from other non-government sources.
- These investments provide critical seed funding for the \$730 billion U.S. arts and culture economic sector, which makes up 4.2% of the annual GDP (a larger share of the economy than transportation, tourism, or construction).
- Similarly, the \$230 million granted by IMLS in 2016 helped support museums' advancements in technology, lifelong community learning, conservation, and preservation.

The universities, colleges, museums, historical societies, arts organizations, libraries, archives, and cultural centers benefitting from federal funding are anchors for their communities and a vital part of our educational enterprise. By facilitating family learning, strengthening communities, and stimulating economic development, these vital resources contribute significantly to our nation's economic development, and also to the education, health, and well-being of its citizens.

As noted in a statement by the Association of Art Museum Directors, "The arts are a shared expression of the human spirit and a hallmark of our humanity. Art touches people throughout their lives—from toddlers first learning about the world, to those with Alzheimer's disease reconnecting with someone they love. Museums offer art programs to help teachers and homeschooleders prepare lessons, to train medical students to be better doctors, to ease the

suffering of veterans with PTSD, and to share with people across the country the best of creative achievement. The NEA, NEH, and IMLS are essential partners in this work, providing grants to many types of nonprofit organizations and helping to bring the arts to every part of America, from rural areas to military bases to urban centers."

Similarly, our government's investment in strengthening the humanities is more critical today than ever. As noted by U.S. Representatives Leonard Lance (R-NJ) and David Price (D-NC) in a recent letter to their colleagues in Congress: "Beyond protecting our national security, the knowledge and competencies represented by humanities fields are critical to a broad range of U.S. interests: fostering a globally competitive workforce, strengthening civic engagement, and preserving our cultural heritage. The NEH is the single most important source of federal funding for research and scholarship in history, literature, foreign languages, and other fields that provide individuals with an ethical, cultural, and historical perspective. Each sector of our country's education enterprise use NEH's competitive grants to conserve and nurture America's heritage and educate the next generation of Americans."

In New Jersey, federal arts and humanities funding has been instrumental to our efforts to provide the best of the world's visual culture in ways that are engaging and accessible to diverse audiences. Such funding is often the lifeblood of small cultural organizations and makes a real impact on communities large and small. By supporting the NEA, NEH, and IMLS, you will enable our museums and cultural institutions to continue to educate, challenge, and inspire the members of our local, national, and international audiences, and to make important contributions to the economy of our state and our nation, the well-being of our citizenry, and the vibrancy of our democracy.

We respectfully ask you to continue to assure that the NEA, NEH, and IMLS have the necessary funding to guarantee the vitality of the arts and humanities in America, and to continue equitably distributing that support across every district of our republic.

Thank you for your consideration.

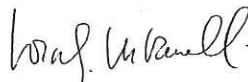
Sincerely,



**James Christen Steward**  
Nancy A. Nasher—David J. Haemisegger,  
Class of 1976, Director,  
Princeton University Art Museum



**Steven Kern**  
Director and CEO Newark Museum



**Lora Urbanelli**  
Director, Montclair Art Museum



**Marti Mayo**  
Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University