



An Arts Advocacy Message from PMTA

The recent PMTA Newsletter contained some important arts advocacy information, but none of the links were active. For your convenience, the article is reprinted below with active links.

The Arts, Politics, and Advocacy

During the recent endless political campaign, I was reminded yet again how little attention the arts receive in public discourse. And yet, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the arts and culture sector represent a \$704 billion industry in the U.S., which accounts for 4.2 percent of our GDP and generates a \$24 billion trade surplus to the United States (U.S Bureau of Economic Analysis). One would think that amount of economic heft would warrant a comment or two.

But in spite of the significant economic impact of the arts (as well as the cultural, social, creative, educational, or intellectual impact), they were never mentioned in any of the presidential debates or campaign appearances, nor did the arts figure in any of the Pennsylvania state races. The 2016 Democratic Party Platform contained a strong statement about the importance of the arts and arts education and a commitment to funding the **NEA** (<https://www.arts.gov> - National Endowment for the Arts) and the **NEH** (<https://www.neh.gov> - National Endowment for the Humanities), as well as funding “for programs providing art and music education in primary and secondary schools.” The Republican Party Platform did not mention the arts.

This campaign is over, but it’s not too early to begin thinking about how we can advocate for the arts during the next election cycle or with local, state and national political leaders at any time. A few days before the election, **Americans for the Arts** (<http://www.americansforthearts.org>) published information, which I passed on to you in an e-blast, concerning the positions on the arts of the two presidential candidates, as well as a **2016 Congressional Arts Report Card**. (<http://artsactionfund.org/pages/congressional-report-card>). The Report Card makes for very interesting reading, even though the elections are now over.

For example, the fact that the Democratic Party Platform strongly supported the arts and the Republican Party Platform didn’t mention the arts does not mean that all Democrats in Congress uniformly support the arts or that Republicans do not.

We can find out how our Pennsylvania Senators and Representatives voted on any number of arts-related issues in the **2016 Congressional Arts Report**

Card. (<http://artsactionfund.org/pages/congressional-report-card>) The Action Fund PAC of Americans for the Arts singled out 17 Senators and 18 members of the House of Representatives for exhibiting exemplary pro-arts leadership during 2015-2016. But not a single person from the Pennsylvania delegation was on either list. (Senator Al Franken, D-MN, was the only member of congress to receive a 100% perfect arts score on the indicators listed by the Action Fund.)

One of the most interesting sections of the Report Card contains suggestions for arts-related questions to ask candidates for office. For example, given the economic information in the first paragraph above, one might ask a candidate, “What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of this economic sector?”

Another question to pose to candidates for local, state, or national office might concern STEM to STEAM. The acronym STEM has become commonplace in discussions about educational policy to promote and improve competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and math. What is not so well-known is that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in Dec. 2015 (more commonly known as **Every Student Succeeds Act - ESSA**) (<http://www.americansforthearts.org/news-room/legislative-news/essa-enacted>) includes dedicated funding for arts education, inclusion of the arts in the “Well-Rounded Education” definition, and integration of the arts into STEM programs – STEM to STEAM.

That legislation passed with broad bipartisan support. Yet, how often is it being supported at our local and state levels? And how many people even know that STEM has become STEAM – with the all-important arts included? You can find information, examples, and tools related to incorporating the arts into **STEM at Resources for STEAM.**

(<https://www.edutopia.org/article/STEAM-resources>) The Resources page provides many inspiring articles and videos about STEM to STEAM. The Edutopia website on which the Resources appear is a core component of the mission of the **George Lucas Educational Foundation** (<https://www.edutopia.org/mission-vision>).

Co-conference chairs Elaine Friedlander and Mary Lynne Bennett are providing us with a unique opportunity at our 2017 PMTA conference. Pennsylvania State Senator Andy Dinniman (D-19th District) has been invited to be our Keynote Speaker. Perhaps this would be a good opportunity for us to speak with a state senator about the most effective ways, in his experience, for us to advocate for the arts with our elected officials, whether individually or as a group. What kind of advocacy is the most persuasive, and how can we become more effective advocates for the arts? I’ll hope to see you June 9 – 11 at the 2017 PMTA [Conference at Lebanon Valley College](#).

THIS JUST IN: This past March, Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) introduced new legislation to strengthen the creative economy referred to in the first paragraph of this article. This week, Congress is just beginning a “lame-duck” legislative session and it is a good time to reach the offices of Senators Casey and Toomey and urge each to add his name as a cosponsor to the **CREATE Act, the Comprehensive Resources for Entrepreneurs in the Arts to Transform**

the Economy (CREATE) Act. To learn more about the bill and its provisions, check out the CREATE Act website for more information. (<http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/legislative-issue-center/artists-entrepreneurs-and-the-creative-economy>).

Take two minutes now to urge your Senator to cosponsor this legislation.

<https://www.votervoice.net/ARTSUSA/Campaigns/45436/Respond>

Lois Svard, NCTM
PMTA Board Member for Arts Awareness and Advocacy
Professor of Music Emerita
Bucknell University

*PMTA is an incorporated non-profit educational organization
committed to the pursuit of excellence in music teaching.
PMTA is an affiliate of Music Teachers National Association.*

www.pamusicteachers.org

PRESIDENT - DEBORAH RODGERS

VICE-PRESIDENT - MARY LYNNE BENNETT

SECRETARY - JOCELYN SWIGGER

TREASURER - JACQUELINE HERBEIN

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT - STEVEN SMITH

Thanks to the PMTA Sponsors for their continued support.

[Visit the PMTA sponsor page.](#)

Elizabethtown College
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Jacobs Music
Kutztown University
Lebanon Valley College

Penn State University
Seton Hill University
Steinway Gallery of Pittsburgh
West Chester University

Robly