



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

July 7, 2010

Speaker Sheldon Silver
250 Broadway, Suite 2307
New York, NY 10007

Senator John L. Sampson
1222 East 96th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11236

Dear Senator Sampson and Speaker Silver:

Manhattan Community Board 4, home to the largest concentration of small to mid-sized non-profit theaters in New York State, asks that you work with the legislature and Governor Patterson to reduce or reverse his proposed 33% cut to NYSCA local assistance funding (grant making to individual art organizations) contained in his FY2010-2011 NYS Budget.

Governor Patterson's proposal will slash NYSCA's local assistance funding from \$41.6 million to \$28.2 million, making this the largest percentage cut to any state agency in the entire budget. The Governor also has budgeted for a 12% cut to NYSCA state operations from \$5.29 million to \$4.84, which will severely hamper NYSCA's ability to oversee the administration of its important mission.

The Governor's proposal reduces the state's per capita spending on the arts from \$2.48 to just \$.84 cents, dropping New York State below the national average of \$.90 cents and putting us 26th in the nation in terms of per capita arts giving. All this in a state where the arts have an economic impact of \$25.7 billion dollars and generate more than 345,000 jobs in 54,000 arts business [i].

We are mindful of the severe budget crisis confronting the State. It is our firm belief though that the arts are a viable answer during an economic crisis, and support of them, in times of crisis, will ultimately improve the State's bottom line, and not detract from it.

NYSCA has been a champion to the Arts Community in New York State for 50 years. It is NYSCA's belief in operational funding, as opposed to funding individual works of art, that has helped keep the doors open for hundreds of performing

arts organizations throughout the state, with dozens of them located specifically within the confines of Manhattan Community District 4.

The theater companies that have made a home in Manhattan Community District 4 produce thousands of performances a year and provide affordable and professional production space for hundreds of other artists, New York City non-profit theater and performing art companies. In addition, these companies bring in new audiences, potential customers and residents to our neighborhoods which create a substantial positive economic impact for local performing arts organizations, businesses and the community at large.

The gains made by the introduction of artists and new audiences in under populated areas also create incalculable social and tax revenue benefits for the City of New York. For example, over the past ten years, the avenues and streets that comprise Manhattan's Garment District/Fashion Center (now a locus of new theater activity in New York City), now teem at night with new audiences, many of whom have never ventured to this particular neighborhood after dark.

The increased night life activity, the introduction of new restaurants, bars, hotels and related businesses in this area of MCD4 are, in part, the practical result of the support NYSCA had previously shown those non-profit performing arts organizations that ventured into this area of town well before other commercial businesses made their decisions to locate there.

Manhattan Community Board 4 respectfully requests that the 33% spending cuts to NYSCA contained in Governor Patterson's FY2010-2011 Budget be reduced or reversed, and that you work in good faith with the Governor to come up with a budget for this important state agency that serves the Arts - which is a vitally important economic engine for Manhattan Community District 4, the City and entire State of New York.

Sincerely,



John Weis, Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4

David Pincus
Theater Task Force

cc. Governor David Paterson
New York City State Assembly members and State Senators.
Heather Hitchens, Executive Director, NYSCA
NYC Electeds