



Joint Finance Committee Hearings Department of State

Delaware Arts Alliance

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Record of Public Comments Representing the Delaware Arts Alliance

Presented by Liane Hansen, former Senior Host of NPR's Weekend Edition Sunday and member of the Delaware Arts Alliance

Thank you Senator McDowell, Representative George-Smith and to all members of the Joint Finance Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Liane Hansen, retired host of NPR's Weekend Edition Sunday and a proud member of the Delaware Arts Alliance.

The Alliance is the unified voice of Delawareans who advocate for the arts to play a central role in our lives...in our education and in the sustainability of our dynamic communities and creative citizens

Our 5 year old organization is truly unique. We encourage collaboration among all of the state's institutions, groups, individuals who not only

create or create a place for artistic expression but who advocate and support them. Art needs people. The Alliance is the sum of its parts. I'd like to recognize those members of the Alliance present. Stand up and show us what you look like.

Let me also acknowledge the members of your distinguished committee and Secretary Bullock for your ongoing support for the arts. Your efforts have to be commended; your commitment provides us with a foundation so we can advance the value of the arts in our communities. And we count on your continuous support.

As a member of the Alliance, and a citizen of Sussex County, I'm prepared to present my case as evidence that the arts benefit the state economically, and contribute to the communities in our three counties.

Like many of a certain age now living here, I am retired. During my decades at NPR, I went everywhere, man. From Encino, to Easton, to Egypt. I chose to live here. Like most of a certain age, I had a dream. A wonderful dream. It came true. I'm now a performer with Clear Space Theatre Company and the Bethany Area Repertory Theatre in Sussex County. I've acted with folks from 8 to 80. More came to the shows. Can you hear the sound of hands clapping?

Take a closer look at the images being projected behind me. People in Delaware engaged in the cultural life of their communities. Not all of them were born here. Some may have been and never left. Some may have left but come back. Why? Because we like it here and these are some of the reasons why.

Okay, let's do the numbers.

The arts do mean business for the state...a \$142.3 million dollar industry that supports close to 4,000 jobs and gives back nearly \$10 million in state and local revenue. Facts from the last Americans for the Arts "Arts & Economic Prosperity Report". Here's another one... the difference between local and non-local event-related spending. Locals spend, on average, \$18 dollars on non-event expenditures like dining, parking, and shopping, while out-of-state visitors spend, on average, \$56. When visitors were asked about the primary purpose of their visit to Delaware, 79% reported that the arts event was the primary purpose for their visit. This fact signals a positive correlation between Delaware's art offerings and out-of-state visitors spending. A vibrant arts community keeps residents and discretionary spending close to home, and attracts visitors who spend money and help businesses thrive. Who doesn't want to live here?

In terms of education, Governor Markell reminded us during his State of State address of the importance of improving the economy and the need for properly trained high school students for the 21st century workplace. To educate the workforce of tomorrow, Delaware requires creativity and innovation; its natural springboard is the arts. Research demonstrates the inclusion of the arts helps improve math and reading skills, as well as nurturing creativity and innovation, two of the most sought after skills in the work force. Our members constantly create opportunities for kids to be involved and engaged. Kids grow in unexpected ways. With access to the arts, they can transform into creatively trained professionals with solid economic prospects and can make innumerable contributions to the quality of all our lives in Delaware.

When Winston Churchill was once asked to cut arts funding in favor of the war effort, he simply replied "then what are we fighting for?" The Alliance will continue to deliver that message. In 2014, we will continue to build a coalition of supporters for the arts and arts education in all the counties in our state. The Alliance stands ready to communicate and collaborate with you so we can tell all people, businesses, and organizations why to visit, study, relocate or stay in Delaware. If you need some more reasons, just ask me.

Thank you!