

## TOPIC: Why funding the arts is important Delaware

Hello, Director Maxwell and Secretary Patibanda-Sanchez.

Thank you so much for letting me speak today - and for all the work you do to understand, weigh, and balance the many perspectives that make Delaware an even better place to live.

My name is **Ursula Sadiq**. I was born right down the road at Kent General, graduated from **Caesar Rodney High School** and the **University of Delaware**, and I now live and vote here in **Kent County**. I serve on the boards of the **Dover Art League** and the **Newark Symphony Orchestra**, I work the front desk at the **Biggs Museum of American Art**, and I'm an artist myself - a dabbler, but still an artist!

I'm here to ask for your support in **fully funding the Division of the Arts' budget request**. That funding keeps Delaware's communities strong and helps create a happier, healthier, and more prosperous life for our citizens.

Here's why it matters - three quick points:

1. **Art is good for our health.**

After a recent Newark Symphony concert, one person wrote to us, unprompted: "*We have sustenance from food and sleep and laughter, but this music touches souls.*" That's the power of art. Making or experiencing art lowers stress, supports healing, and improves mental and physical well-being. Healthy people make for a healthy, thriving Delaware.

2. **Art strengthens community.**

At the Biggs, our Thursday night programs have brought more than 100 people together to make, share, and experience art. These gatherings spark new friendships and collaborations—people who might never have met otherwise. The arts create spaces where Delawareans connect across age, background, and experience.

3. **Art fuels the economy.**

At the Dover Art League, our 200 hours of quarterly classes bring people downtown—where they dine, shop, and contribute to Dover's revitalization. More broadly, the creative sector supports **one in every 25 Delaware jobs** and helps make our towns lively, interesting, and fun places to be.

4.

To close, when you invest in the arts, you're really investing in Delaware's **health, community, and prosperity**. Please support the **Division of the Arts' budget request**.

If you'd like to connect further, my email address has been submitted—and I always love talking about the power of the arts. Thank you for your time.

Ursula Sadiq