

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 30, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Thank you for recognizing the latest National Arts and Humanities Month with your historic nominations of Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson as Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts and Shelly Lowe as Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. As you pursue further opportunities to restore our nation's commitment to the arts and humanities, we urge you to reinstate the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities via Executive Order.

The arts and humanities can be powerful tools in rebuilding our civic culture and continuing to foster economic growth. The coronavirus pandemic has devastated the creative economy. During the peak of the pandemic, more than 2 million jobs and \$150 billion in goods and services were lost from our creative industries.¹ We know that this critical sector can contribute up to 4.5 percent of our national GDP², and the arts and culture also serve a transformational role in our communities.

In recent years, there have been significant declines in the teaching of arts and humanities to our nation's students. Based on data from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, student participation in humanities education at colleges and universities continues to decline. Loss of access to arts and humanities education is also a fundamental matter of equity, which is especially important to address considering how creative learning bolsters academic success. A study from the NEA shows that, since the 1980s, white students have experienced almost no decline in arts education, yet during the same period Black and Latinx students saw sharp declines of 49 percent and 40 percent, respectively.³

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities would provide the White House, future NEH and NEA Chairs, and other related-agency leaders with the research and expert policy analysis needed to help rejuvenate arts and humanities education while also maximizing the potential of our cultural sector and creative economy. Further, this advisory committee could support related initiatives, for example, at the Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration, to sustain the creative workforce and the independent venues relied on by artists.

¹ Richard Florida and Michael Seman, *Lost Art: Measuring COVID-19's Devastating Impact on America's Creative Economy*, August 2020, page 3.

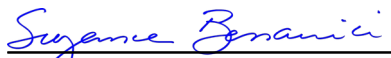
² Argonne National Laboratory, COVID-19 RSFLG Data and Assessment Working Group, *Analysis: COVID-19's Impacts on Arts and Culture*, COVID-19 Weekly Outlook, January 4, 2021, page 5.


³ Nick Rabkin and E. C. Hedberg, *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*, National Endowment for the Arts, February 2011, page 15.


At a time when our nation is both recovering from the effects of the pandemic and experiencing deep divides, engagement with the arts and our history can play an important role in helping us heal. The advisory committee was originally established by President Reagan and has enjoyed bipartisan support throughout its history, reinvigorating our civic education and supporting American excellence in the arts can and must be a part of your efforts to unify our country. Reconvening the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities by an Executive Order would be a further recognition of the critical role artists, scholars, historians, philosophers, and the creative economy as a whole play in our nation.


Thank you, again, for the historic commitments you have already made to arts and humanities for all Americans, and we look forward to our continued partnership in these ongoing efforts.

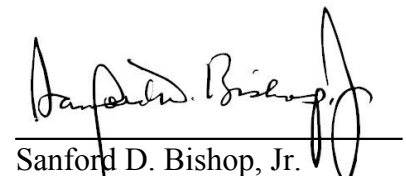
Sincerely,



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

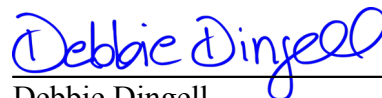

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress


Jamaal Bowman
Member of Congress

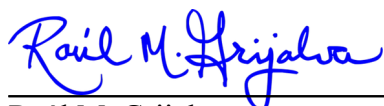

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Jim Cooper
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



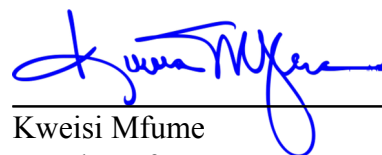
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



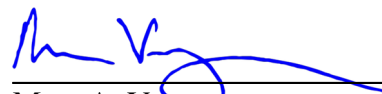
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nikema Williams", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress