

Testimony on Senate Bill 440 to the Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Carolyn McGinn, Chair
March 8, 2012

Jonathan Katz, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)
jonathan.katz@nasaa-arts.org
(202) 347-6352

Madame Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 440. I am Jonathan Katz, chief executive officer of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). Earlier in my career, I had the honor of serving as executive director of the Kansas Arts Commission (KAC) in the administrations of Governor Robert Docking and Governor Robert Bennett. The KAC enjoyed strong bipartisan support during my tenure, especially for encouraging the development of local arts agencies and for promoting the availability of life-long education in the arts for all Kansans. My commissioners and community colleagues demonstrated creativity and accountability in using the arts to improve the quality of life all over Kansas, and I am confident there is broad grassroots support for continued public and private investment in that work.

I am writing to share information about arts agencies in other states that have been structured or have developed programs to emphasize the connection between the cultural enrichment they provide and economic prosperity.

There is a great deal of evidence as well as widespread support for the idea that the roles played by state arts agencies to broaden and deepen participation in the arts also provide public benefits aligned with a state's economic development goals and the strengthening of a state's creative economy.

Numerous states note this alignment in their strategic planning:

Colorado Creative Industries, whose mission is: "To promote, support and expand the creative industries to drive Colorado's economy, grow jobs and enhance our quality of life," has among its goals that "Non-profit and for-profit creative businesses, artists and creative entrepreneurs will have increased access to financial support, skill development and professional networking."

The Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, has identified one of its key goals to be: "Make Louisiana's Cultural Economy the engine of economic and social rebirth," closely related another goal which is to "Rebuild Louisiana to worldwide preeminence as a top tourist destination."

The Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, an agency integral to the work of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, helps foster "a sense of place" as part of the state's broad community development, and adds "cultural resources" to the states quality of life branding strategy that includes woods and waters.

The Arkansas Arts Council, recognizing that artists and arts organizations are small business entrepreneurs, recently completed a three-year study on “strategies to increase creative capacity and competitive advantage,” which led to recommendations designed to “help Arkansas reach its full potential as a center of creative activity, thereby contributing to its economic growth.”

Many state arts agencies have established grant programs to achieve targeted economic development and employment objectives:

The Illinois Arts Council’s Youth Employment in the Arts Program is an on-the-job training initiative in partnership with not-for-profit cultural organizations that develops the work skills of high school students as it provides them with positive cultural experiences.

The Missouri Arts Council supports new arts projects in downtown areas of DREAM communities qualified by the Department of Economic Development for their commitment to community revitalization and economic development. The arts activities must be linking to increasing the number of cultural tourism visitors, the length of hotel stays and the attraction of the downtown area to business.

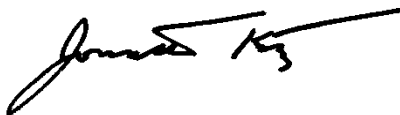
The Maine Arts Commission’s Creative Communities = Economic Development (CCED) Grant encourages cultural, economic and governmental sectors to work together to effect community revitalization. This consortium grant will be delivered to two or more nonprofit cultural organizations within a geographic community or region.

The state arts agencies in Rhode Island and Colorado have structural relationships with their state film commissions. A dozen state arts agencies, including Indiana, Maryland and West Virginia foster the development of local cultural districts in communities of all sizes. The state arts agencies in Montana, New Hampshire and South Carolina offer programs that stimulate artist entrepreneurship and small business development. More than half a dozen state arts agencies including Georgia, Kentucky and North Carolina participate in programs that market the products of their state’s crafts artists. The state arts agencies of Texas and Vermont are among those that have produced toolkits for local artists and communities to use in the development of crafts merchandize and heritage activities.

In short, it would seem, from the policies and programs earning support in other states, that there is every opportunity for the agency structure proposed in SB 440 to effectively link the cultural and economic benefits that result from participation in the arts.

I list below a few resources for further information. Please contact me if additional information from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) would be helpful in your deliberations.

Respectfully,



Jonathan Katz, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
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NASAA Creative Economic Development Resource Center

<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Key-Topics/Creative-Economic-Development/index.php>

Arts & the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0901ARTSANDECONOMY.PDF>

Promoting Film and Media to Enhance State Economic Development

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0807PROMOTINGFILMMEDIA.PDF>

Creative Placemaking

<http://www.nea.gov/pub/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>