

March 1, 2015

Mr. Brunk,

As the current Director of Fisch Haus (one of the founding organizations of the Commerce Street Art District), and long-time resident of Commerce St., I feel strongly that it is imperative the state of Kansas implement some means of reducing the tax burden of its resident artists. The arts are an unique industry, in that the artists themselves rarely are able to make a living wage, while the economy benefits a great deal. One recent report states that arts and culture provide a nearly 700 billion dollar boost to the US economy each year; clearly a significant quantitative and qualitative contribution.

The majority of these artists, however, do not reap much of this revenue. Music / art / book / ticket / etc. sales are typically not high enough, at a grassroots level, to sustain the very people that are single-handedly pushing this economic growth at their own expense of both time and resources. Fisch Haus, for example, is completely artist-run and funded, relying on the generosity of volunteers and donors to provide free events to the community. Our attendance grows year by year, yet we continually struggle to make ends meet; frankly, a serious issue in all arts organizations in this state.

Legislation that offers our current and future cultural generators an incentive to continue their work would certainly play a large part in maintaining our state's competitive edge, in a wide range of applications. A similar tax district was created in Kansas City, MO nearly a decade ago, and there is a great deal of information available to highlight the success of that endeavor.

Regardless of your personal and political views on the subject, I believe we can all agree that the arts have an extraordinary impact on our society, and it is your responsibility as an elected official in this state to perpetuate that momentum.

Sincerely,



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