

I rise as an original cosponsor of H. Res. 1582, to honor and salute Americans for the Arts on its 50th anniversary. My colleagues should not be surprised that two of the scientists here on the floor, the gentleman from Michigan and I, would rise to speak in favor of the arts. I want to commend Representative Slaughter for introducing this important resolution but especially for her tireless work to champion the arts and to remind us all of the importance they play in our lives and in our society.

As a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I believe that the arts play a crucial role in our society--enhancing our creativity, promoting critical aspects of education, and providing Americans with opportunities to view works of beauty and personal expression. Through the arts, we as a Nation, as a people, come to know ourselves. We push our boundaries, and we break free of our prejudices. Furthermore, the arts inspire our children to explore their own creativity and to encourage positive development in the course of their educational careers. Has anyone here not observed how a student can blossom academically after the student finds a sense of accomplishment and achievement through artistic expression? The arts are a fundamental component of our society and warrant Federal funding.

Americans for the Arts was chartered in 1960 in North Carolina with the "mission of enhancing public and private support for the nonprofit arts and serving local arts councils in the United States." Fifty years later, we all owe Americans for the Arts a debt of gratitude for successfully accomplishing this mission year in and year out. A few years after they were formed, Americans for the Arts helped establish the National Endowment for the Arts, which, to this day, has exposed millions of Americans to the arts and has supported local artists in a multitude of disciplines.

Even in this difficult economy, Americans for the Arts has continued to lead by supporting local public and nonprofit arts agencies. Americans for the Arts has also continued to help expose a new generation of students to the arts, both in and out of school. Further, as the gentlewoman from New York reported, Americans for the Arts has noted in its report of "Arts and Economic Prosperity" across the country that the "nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year." The report also details that the arts support 5.7 million jobs and generate \$29.6 billion in government revenue. So not only are the arts good for our cultural development as a society, but they are good for our economic development as well.

While today we are recognizing Americans for the Arts for their first 50 years of accomplishments, we here should wish them well for the next 50 years. We need Americans for

the Arts to remain, for years to come, a vital institution in our society.