

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROCCO LANDESMAN
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
APPEARING BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATION SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be appearing before this subcommittee for the first time as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. I look forward to discussing with you the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget request of \$161,315,000, which includes support for our ongoing activities, as well as \$5 million for a new initiative we refer to as "Our Town."

Before I speak about the President's Budget before you, I would like to briefly bring you up to date on what we have been doing since I joined the Agency this past August.

Fiscal Year 2010 grants

As you know, in Fiscal Year 2010, we expect to invest nearly \$140 million in support of the arts throughout the Nation. Through the more than 2,000 direct grants expected to be awarded, we can anticipate reaching nearly 100 million people. But our reach and impact go even further; through the 40% of our grantmaking funds awarded to the State Arts Agencies and their regional arts organizations, thousands of additional grants are awarded to support worthy projects in communities throughout the country.

Arts Education

In Fiscal Year 2010, we have an almost \$8 million budget for Learning in the Arts grants, and we will invest well over \$4 million in arts education through our Access to Artistic Excellence grants and state partnerships. In addition, I have challenged my staff to fund at least one arts education project in every Congressional district.

Community Engagement

In order for the NEA to invest most effectively, it is important that the arts organizations and creative communities across this country feel closely connected to us.

We are using technology to connect even more Americans with the Agency. We have launched an Agency blog on our website (www.arts.gov) and a Twitter account (@NEAarts). We will shortly launch a Facebook page to continue to broaden our reach and keep the public informed in real time. And, we have begun webcasting Agency convenings; most recently, we webcast the March 2010 public meeting of our National Council on the Arts, which helped ensure even greater transparency into the work of the Agency.

Technology is no substitute for in-person meetings. So last October, I announced that I would begin an "Art Works" tour. When I say "art works," I have three meanings for these two words:

1. They are a noun that refers to the creation of artists: works of art;
2. They remind us that art works on audiences and viewers to transport and inspire them; and
3. They are a reminder that arts workers have real jobs that are a vital part of this country's economy. I was in Pennsylvania last week, and the Governor cited the Pennsylvania Cultural Data Project, which reports that in Pennsylvania alone, nonprofit cultural organizations and their audiences had direct expenditures of \$1.99 billion, which supports over 48,000 full-time equivalent jobs and means over \$900,000,000 in resident household income.

I began seeing how arts works in Peoria last November, and most recently – just last Monday, in fact – I had the pleasure of joining Congressman Simpson in his district to see how art works in Boise, Jerome, and Twin Falls, Idaho.

Everywhere I go, I see how the arts help create the sorts of places where people like to live, work, and play. In fact, Chairman Moran recently wrote in the *Falls Church News-Press* about how the arts have transformed communities ranging from New York Mills, Minnesota, to Paducah, Kentucky.

And Professor Mark Stern, along with his colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania and The Reinvestment Fund, has discovered that the presence of arts has three main effects:

1. The arts are a force for social cohesion and civic engagement. People who participate in the arts are more likely to engage in other civic activities, leading to more stable neighborhoods.
2. The arts are a force for child welfare: low income populations with high cultural participation rates are more than twice as likely to have very low truancy and delinquency rates.
3. And finally, the arts are a poverty fighter. They do this through direct employment, and they do this by leveraging other jobs: the restaurants, retail stores, and hotels that spring up alongside cultural districts.

Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request

This brings me to the President's Fiscal 2011 Budget Request for the National Endowment for the Arts. As you know, the NEA has a threefold mission: to support excellence in the arts, both new and established; to bring the arts to all Americans; and to provide leadership in arts education.

The President's Budget Request maintains the NEA's positive momentum in providing support to this country's nonprofit arts organizations. There are two changes that I would like to highlight for your attention.

American Masterpieces

In April 2005, the NEA launched a funding initiative called "American Masterpieces" that was designed to ensure audiences the opportunity to see classic America repertoire. As we reviewed

these grants, we realized that the sorts of projects and organizations being funded through this program were largely redundant to the support being offered through our core discipline grants.

The one notable exception to this being “The Big Read,” which provides communities the opportunity to read, discuss, and engage with one another around a shared reading experience. This program will continue, and it will continue as the agency’s largest national initiative.

In Fiscal 2010, the NEA’s budget contained \$10 million in “American Masterpieces” funding. In our 2011 Budget, you will see that we have proposed instead to have \$5 million fund *Our Town* (which I will discuss in a moment); \$1.5 million to continue “The Big Read,” and the balance to contribute toward offsetting any differences between our Fiscal 2010 and 2011 allocations for our direct grants.

Our Town

We are extraordinarily proud of the success of our programs and the benefits that accrue to the American people. We believe, however, that there is an element of our grant-programming that has been missing; an element that is particularly important today. This is, of course, the “Our Town” initiative presented in the FY 2011 budget.

This initiative is built upon solid fact-based research, such as that of Professor Stern, personal first-hand observations, and the recognition that all Americans have an investment in the places they live.

Through “Our Town,” we anticipate investing the proposed \$5 million in up to 35 communities to support planning and design projects, and arts engagement strategies. The funded projects might include the mapping of a cultural district along with its development potential; the integration of public art into civic spaces; a community waterfront festival; affordable housing for low-income artists; rehearsal spaces to serve as research and development space for our performing arts companies; outdoor exhibitions and performances to enliven civic spaces and engage citizens; and on and on.

Federal Agency collaborations – A New Emphasis

Almost every federal agency under this administration is looking at its role in helping to create sustainable communities, and I have been meeting with other federal agency heads to talk about ways that our agencies might partner in deep and meaningful ways. It is my hope that as “Our Town” recipients are selected, we can look at the other federal agencies working in those same places to discover areas of mutual interest and overlap.

Conclusion

Everywhere I have gone over the past 9 months, I have been encouraged by the resilience and adaptability of our arts organizations, as they strive to fulfill their missions in the midst of a challenging economy. They remain active and optimistic, and I remain eager to enjoy their work and offer the NEA’s support as effectively as we can. A thriving arts sector brings with it economic and cultural vitality that helps drive community sustainability. In short, “art works.” That’s my story, and I am sticking to it.

Let me end by thanking the Chairman and the distinguished members of the Subcommittee for your ongoing support of both the Agency and the arts. I look forward to our discussion, and am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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